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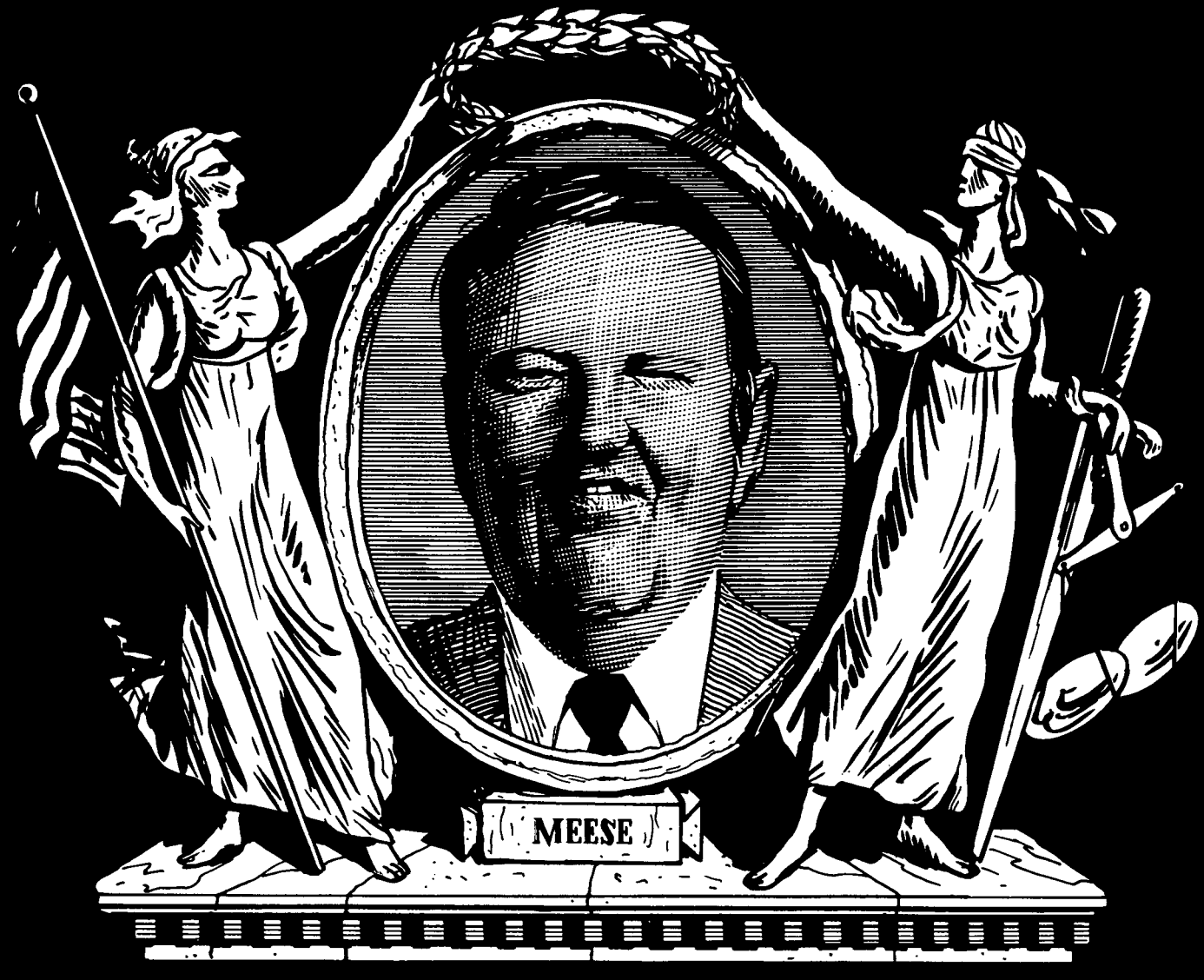

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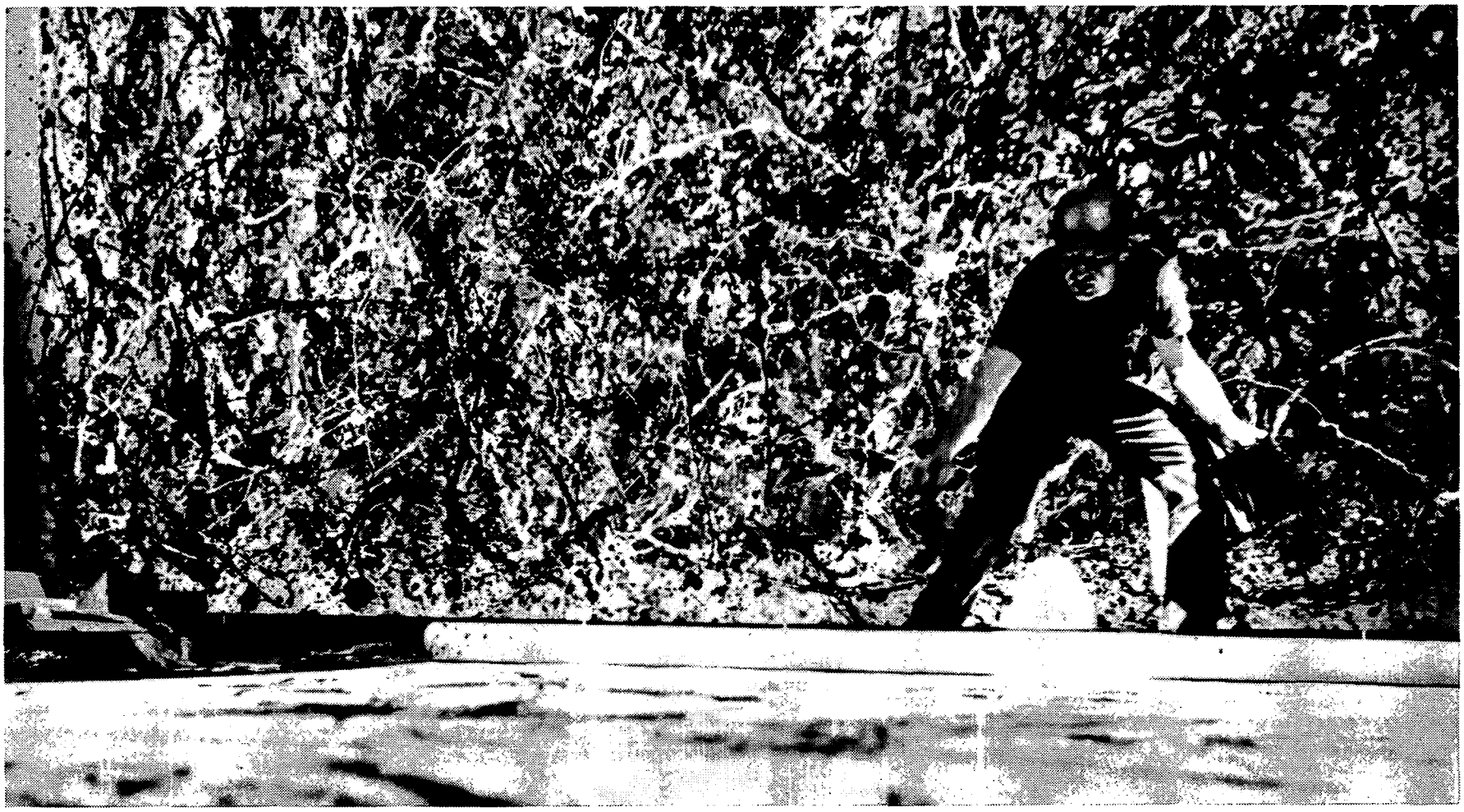

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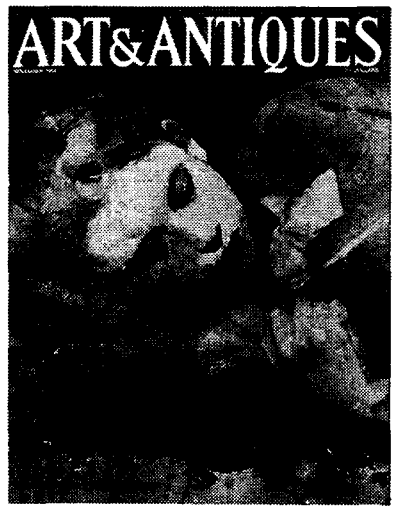

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Volume 18, Number 6, June 1985

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A one-year subscription (12 issues) costs $21, outside the United States $25. Foreign airmail rates sent on request. All correspondence (manuscripts, subscriptions, threatening letters, federal grants, etc.) should be sent to *The American Spectator*, P.O. Box 1969, Bloomington, Indiana 47402. (812) 334-2715. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes. U.S.A. newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributor, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, OH 44870.

ISSN 0148-8414. Published remarkably without regard to sex, lifestyle, race, color, creed, physical handicap, or national origin.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The American Spectator, P.O. Box 1969, Bloomington, IN 47402 (see form on classfied page).

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• April was a pleasant enough month. The weather was unseasonably mild, and baseball season began. All that dampened a growing sense of festival was the sudden and seemingly ubiquitous reappearance of Mr. Walter Cronkite on American television, despite his solemn oaths about retiring. On NBC, he was seen asseverating quite irrelevantly that Jimmy Carter was "the best brain I've known sitting in the White House," notwithstanding clear evidence that the country would have been better off had the brain been kept in a jar in the basement. On CBS, he was everywhere, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Vietnam war as though the war had been a soap opera.

• There he would stand unctuously crooning from Hanoi, from Saigon, from empty boondock fields. Always he would spread his characteristic potion of one part fact, two parts obliviousness, three parts balderdash, and the rest insufferable piety. Outside of Televisionland it is hard to believe that such a person could exist. In a maternity ward he might be mugged. In Disneyland he would be waylaid and tortured by the juvenile clientele. At the conclusion of his Vietnam war ceremonial, he solemnly faced the cameras, adumbrated conflict in the world, and suggested that future hostilities could be avoided "if no war can be considered without the consensus of the American people and Government." Now there you have it, the most difficult decision a government makes will henceforth be made by holding a nationwide town hall meeting! If researchers ever agree on all the relevant signs and symptoms, plus its pathology, they must not flinch from calling it Cronkite's Disease; and those national magazines that want to illustrate the disease's degenerative effects will only have to feature photographs of Walter's grave and vacant mug.

• Fighting among Shi'ite Moslems, Sunni Moslems, and Druse members of the Progressive Socialist party brought down the Lebanese government of Prime Minister Rashid Karami, and the government of Ronald Reagan was not all that secure either when at month's end it was announced that our Ron would lay a wreath in a German cemetery wherein members of the Waffen SS are interred. In Chesapeake, Virginia, a blind man was arrested for driving his girlfriend's vehicle while under the influence of alcohol. The driver, Mr. Mark Daniels, explained that he had taken the wheel because his companion was even more squiffed than he, but the *polizia* booked him anyway. Officer Cibella Borges was reinstated on the New York City police force with $70,000 back pay after the Appellate Division of the state Supreme Court decided that the 27-year-old cutie could not be barred from the force merely because pictures of her sex organs had appeared in a men's magazine. Mrs. Madalyn Murray O'Hair's 15th Annual Atheists Convention on Easter weekend was enlivened by the appearance of her God-fearing son, William, who scandalized mom by holding a "God and Country" rally on that very weekend. And Mrs. Charles Neuffer announced that yet another collection of the works of one of America's greatest defunct poets, J. Gordon Coogler, will be published in limited edition this fall. *Coogler Revisited* can be ordered by sending $12 before June 15 to Professor Neuffer at 4532 Meadowood Road, Columbia, South Carolina 29206.

• America's elites continue their unwholesome preoccupation with poverty, bringing unnecessary gloom to their every humanitarian day, ruining the brie and spoiling the chablis. Moreover, it is clear that they are raising to the level of folk hero some of the most tedious people in the Republic and some of the fattest. The noble poor often make do with only one color television set! Bills for their marathon telephone calls to sisters across the street are bleeding them white! And then they often have to share their legal aid lawyers, sex therapists, and other government quacks with dozens of decidedly disagreeable imbeciles. When their food stamps have run out for the month, many have no way to pay for the opsomanias save by shedding all honor and idle hours and entering the capitalistic work force. It is all too, too ghastly for the elites to bear. Senator Edward Kennedy has lost twenty pounds, and according to the *Boston Herald* is down to a skeletal 230. And now comes word that Mr. Edward A. Markowitz will no longer be peddling his tax shelters to such friends of humanity as Mr. Dick Cavett, Miss Erica Jong, and Mr. Woody Allen. They were but three of the humanitarians named as his clients when Mr. Markowitz pled guilty on April 25 to charges that his shelters were bogus. The aforementioned were charged with no wrong, but now along with fretting publicly over the indispensable poor they are going to have to think about how to shelter their lush incomes. Would Mr. T. Boone Pickens, Jr. have some advice? What tax shelters does Mother Theresa employ? The poor of America have the highest standard of living of any poor population in the world and rarely work, nonetheless theoretical conceptions of their plight haunt our apolaustic days.

• In White Plains, New York, Mr. Russell Holder claimed that he did it "for the fun of it." Yet the 27-year-old fishmonger's winsome insouciance could be pure affectation intended to divert us from his darker side, for he now admits to having murdered his two roommates after one complained of unseemly odors issuing from his person. Which is it, Mr. Holder, all fun and games or squirrelly overreaction? And while on the matter of squirrels, the squirrels across from the White House in Lafayette Park began purloining unguarded peacenik pamphlets after the Park Service cleared the park of a winter's accumulation of leaves. Naturally the peaceniks are siding with the squirrels, and they now make vespertime sorties into the suburbs to assure ample supplies of leaves for their new friends. Administrators at the University of California, San Diego are being forced by court order to extend the same rights and privileges to the conservative/libertarian *California Review* as to other university groups such as the Nude Kite Flyers Club and the Homosexual Vegetarians' Commune. The media's moguls came down with acute anxiety when Mr. Ted Turner announced his intention to buy CBS, but wait until they hear that Mr. John O'Sullivan has assured himself of a new Liberty of London tie every month by taking over our "Presswatch" column. The erstwhile editor of *Policy Review*, formerly with London's *Daily Telegraph* and now a columnist with the *Times*, keeps a vigilant eye on the American media from his position as editorial page editor of the infamous Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post*!

• Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union continues to glow in the news with reports of stupendous innovations. Energetic Americans in recent years have introduced the idea of the "working lunch" and the "working breakfast," but it is the Soviet Union's Mr. Gorbachev who upon the burial of his predecessor Konstantin Chernenko developed the "working funeral," and now comes word that the bald, pear-shaped, Kennedyesque Russian is stamping out corruption and introducing the visionary profit motive, first propounded by Dr. Marx in the last year of his life and placed in a sealed envelope, not to be opened until the second coming of Halley's Comet. Yet there is evidence that Mr. Gorbachev may have, as the phrase has it, peaked. With his ruling, announced late in the month, against public tippling he may have gone too far. And there is evidence of insubordination. On April 8 an aide to the Soviet Union's United Nations mission was nabbed for using a slug in a subway turnstile, and when reminded by a New York City official of Mr. Gorbachev's pronunciamentoes against corruption his response was, roughly translated, "Ha and ha, ha."

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• Another New Age prophet has turned toes up. This time it is Mr. Richard Cox, the advocate of health through prolonged ingestion of water. Mr. Cox, according to pathologists in London where he lived his last sodden years, died of "water intoxication." In Wavre, Belgium, Miss Jeanine Deckers, the "Singing Nun" who achieved worldwide renown 20 years ago with her hit "Dominique," committed suicide. And America has two new media heroes, Mrs. Cathleen Crowell Webb and Mr. Gary Dotson. Mr. Dotson now languishes in an Illinois calaboose, owing to Mrs. Webb's 1977 testimony that he raped her. Now she abjures all her earlier accusations and is practically on a first-name basis with every talk show host in the country. It is only a matter of time before she comes out with a line of designer sheets. The Italian Communist party elected its first pederast to the Party hierarchy, and the lucky chap will head the Party's youth federation. Finally, the unscotchable Miss Amy Carter was arrested at an anti-apartheid demonstration at the South African embassy after declaring, "I'm proud to be my father's daughter." Doubtless, it has not been easy. *—RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

Corrections

I would like to apologize to all *American Spectator* readers for the foolish error that led me to represent New York City as paying $50,000 per person in taking care of the homeless ("Visits with the Homeless," *TAS*, May 1985). As several readers immediately pointed out, $200 million per year divided among 40,000 homeless people is $5,000 a person, not $50,000. I am most apologetic, though, to those readers (and editors) who didn't catch the error, and may have repeated it. Once things appear in print, it is hard to dispel the impression that they are true, and I hate to see misinformation abounding.

While the $50,000-a-year picture is only a figment of my misplaced decimal point, the $5,000 figure isn't accurate either. The correct figure is that New York is spending about $18,000 per housing unit for the homeless. The figure of 40,000 homeless people is highly inflated. It includes what city officials are calling "the hidden homeless"—recently described by the *New York Times* as including "newcomers to the city who have not yet found their own home."

According to the latest figures from the Coalition for the Homeless, New York is now providing housing for 3,500 "homeless families"—about 11,000 people, almost all welfare mothers and their children. In addition, it provides permanent shelter for about 7,500 homeless individuals. (Another one thousand or so are sheltered voluntarily by churches and synagogues in cold weather.)

Thus, with $200 million budgeted, the city is spending $18,000 per year for each housing unit provided to the homeless. (This figure is almost certainly accurate, since the people I talked with at the Martinique Hotel were being given $21,000 to pay for two-room suites.) The median family income in New York City is only $14,000. The $18,000 a year could easily cover the mortgage and taxes on a $100,000 home.

My point is not to denigrate the homeless for "living high." The conditions in which they live are squalid at best. My point is that New York's rent-control policies, coupled with the family break-up encouraged by the welfare system, creates a situation where tax-payers must pay enormous amounts of money to accomplish very little. *—William Tucker*
Brooklyn, New York

In my review of Ben Hart's *Poisoned Ivy* (*TAS*, May 1985), a small yet critical error distorted the meaning of my reference to affirmative action. I had meant only to make a limited criticism of Hart's opposition to quotas at Dartmouth College: The point was, why be concerned about blacks not measuring up at Dartmouth, if whites don't either? Unfortunately, in the process of transcription the key sentence—"Without impugning *the traditional arguments against* quotas that are, in and of themselves, compelling, it is important. . . ."—was altered to read—"Without impugning quotas, that are, in and of themselves, compelling, it is important. . . ." The result was that I sounded as if I didn't wholeheartedly embrace the conservative position on affirmative action. Not true. I just don't wholeheartedly embrace the conservative position on Dartmouth College. As anyone who has read *Poisoned Ivy* will tell you, there's a difference. *—Malcolm Gladwell*
Washington, D.C.

Hook on the Stockdales

In his review of Jim and Sybil Stockdale's *In Love and War* (*TAS*, April 1985), Colonel Harry Summers scants the significance of Averell Harriman's ill-advised counsel to suppress the news, known to the American government early on, that the North Vietnamese were torturing American prisoners of war. There is no need to assume that, as Colonel Summers suggests, Ambassador Harriman was concerned to appease the North Vietnamese. He honestly believed that if the news was revealed, it would worsen the condition of the American prisoners.

What Ambassador Harriman's judgment on this matter and other issues affecting our policy towards Communism truly reveals, despite his stubborn belief that he is an expert on Communism, is an abysmal and persistent ignorance of Communist theory, strategy, and political warfare. Because Harriman sat in the same room with Stalin and has had negotiations with Soviet officials over commercial concessions (in which, although wined, dined, and grossly flattered, he was always out-foxed), he is under the pathetic illusion that he has "inside knowledge" of how Communists think. Like one of his calamitous predecessors as Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Joseph Davies, he seems to believe that knowledge of the operational code of the Politburo can be acquired by diplomatic osmosis.

Colonel Summers is right that, because we are an essentially civilian country, American public opinion can never be indifferent to the fate of its fighting men and women, the sons and daughters of our townsmen and neighbors, if not our immediate families. Possibly for that reason, had the nation been informed of the tortures and outrages against the American prisoners when they began, American public opinion would have been aroused to a pitch that would have permitted a more intelligent prosecution of the war once we were already involved—leaving aside for the moment the dubious wisdom of the original commitment by Kennedy. It would have indicated, despite the calming assurances of the Tom Wickers and Anthony Lewises, what to expect if unconditional withdrawal, without guarantees against Communist mini-holocausts, took place. Broadcasting news of what was occurring to American prisoners of war would have made it difficult even for New Left zealots in our colleges and press to sing the praises of Ho Chi Minh while his minions were torturing Americans.

The effects of the revelations of what American prisoners of war were undergoing on the conduct and upshot of the war, are somewhat speculative. But not at all speculative is what any person knowledgeable about how Communists think and behave could have predicted, viz., that the torture and mistreatment would stop just as soon as the revelations made the headlines. The Vietnamese Communists reacted as expected. For them, as for all Communists engaged in a war against a democratic power like the United States, one of the most important fronts is the home front, here in our open society. This is not only true of the chequered history of Soviet relations with the West, especially of the actions designed to curb the offensive power of the Soviet Union—always denounced as provocative by the Kremlin—but of North Korean propaganda (not so successful), and of North Vietnamese, Cuban, and Nicaraguan propaganda (highly successful).

There are many other virtues in the Stockdale book, the most important of which are not related to the war but to the perennial issue of how men and women behave in extreme situations—when they must pit their values and very lives against the enemies of human freedom. And this in a struggle in which not only are they unsure to win, but when the odds are against them! It is a pity that Colonel Summers missed their central significance. They make the Stockdales' book much more than another book on Vietnam.

—Sidney Hook
Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

Colonel Harry G. Summers replies:
I am more than happy to defer to Professor Hook's far greater insights into the motives behind Ambassador Harriman's actions, and agree with him completely that the news of prisoner torture ought to have been broadcast. I had thought the conclusion of my review stressed the "central significance" of Stockdale's courage and determination, but evidently this message was not sufficiently clear. Professor Hook's emphasis, then, is well taken.

Hugs and Hisses

Thank you for your recent article by Andrew Ferguson on Dr. Leo Buscaglia ("The Love Doctor," *TAS*, April 1985). How anyone could be taken in by the stomach-turning maunderings of this man is absolutely beyond my (and my wife's) imagination. It's nice to know

(continued on page 49)

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EDITORIALS

THE WEIRD WAR

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

April marked the tenth anniversary of South Vietnam's liberation or fall. It depends on one's point of view. As all the world knows, the Vietnam war was controversial and, of course, tragic and brutal, but has anyone ever noted that it was also rather bizarre? Perhaps one has to be steeped in history to notice, but very few wars fought by Western nations and no other war fought by America has been aswirl with so much confusion and apparent weirdness. Through it all, the only participants who remained clear-sighted and resolute were those who on April 29, 1975 renamed Saigon Ho Chi Minh City.

Surely it was bizarre to send more than 550,000 men into combat without the concomitants of a declaration of war and while LBJ was engaged in the most ambitious and expensive domestic programs in our history. Then too, the entire war was broadcast to us while we ate and by reporters who seemed strangely neutral. There were "peace" demonstrations of incongruous bellicosity and unsurpassed frivolousness: affairs of state coming under the summary influence of drugged-up singers whose identities time has now for the most part obscured and of youths maundering about a decidedly juvenile utopia. Professors looked on admiringly, and from within America's circles of power came antiwar pronunciamentoes of the kind Bobby Kennedy uttered but a few years after his brother had introduced 16,000 "advisers" into South Vietnam: "What we are doing to the Vietnamese is not very different than what Hitler did to the Jews."

The aftermath brought on more of the same. There was the widely celebrated Shawcross thesis arguing that those Cambodians who had triumphed over U.S. policy immediately set about slaughtering their countrymen because the trauma of that policy was unshakable. There was the claim that our veterans were ignored because we blamed them for the Vietnamese defeat—a claim confected by the very same activists who had called these men baby killers and war criminals. There was the alacrity with which Vietnam was—and still is—called a military defeat, though our military won every major battle and was barred by law from the final showdown. Finally, it will forever strike me as quite strange that in the middle and late 1970s the peace movement cited the aftermath of Vietnam as a vindication, proving the superiority of negotiations over military action. Influential Americans accepted this preposterosity even though these were the years of Indochina's "re-education camps," the boat people, Khmer Rouge genocide, and lethal chemical warfare against Lao tribesmen and Cambodian villagers.

As Americans do not much interest themselves with the past, recollecting the bizarre episodes of the Vietnam war is not easy, and for many young people today there is nothing to recollect. But some of the weirdness can now be experienced afresh by following the outbursts that have attended publication of Richard Nixon's new book, *No More Vietnams*, an analysis of the political and military errors committed by administrations and by Congress in Southeast Asia. Once again there are the petty recriminations, the misrepresentations of American policy, the odd academic discourses, the debating points, the confusion. Confusion was one of the antiwar activists' most enduring bequests, making foreign policy absurdly difficult then and now, and encouraging the long, long march of weirdly demented assertions. For instance, it is now deemed quite enlightened to hold that the "dominoes," whose fall we sought to prevent, never fell—only South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

In time, of course, historians will see through the bizarreries of the era, and chronicle the war accurately. Then it will be recorded that much that Nixon has written in this book is unassailable and that the questionable points he makes are at least plausible—for instance, that Congress's 1974 ban on the reintroduction of American military power and its refusal to resupply the South rendered two decades of American foreign policy practically futile. But what has been the point of all the critics' weird conjurings? Has it been an attempt to make traditional American isolationism appear sophisticated, as a session with one's shrink appears sophisticated? I believe so, and after listening to the critics scrupling over our policy in Central America today, it appears that the sophisticates are still with us. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

ON TO THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

Why is it, one wonders, that precisely now, beset as we are by foreign policy problems, the progressives of the Republic have heated up the question of human rights in South Africa? After all, South Africa has been repugnant for years. The same protests now being mounted against South Africa could with equal justification have been mounted in the 1960s or even in the late 1970s. Moreover, human rights are a decimal point or so more generous in South Africa today than heretofore—though true democracy is probably no closer.

The explanation for this sudden outburst of protest against South Africa is that in the past progressives were preoccupied with the transgressions of other nations. There was "the corrupt Thieu regime," which had to be brought up to American Good Government standards. There was the tyrannical Shah whose friendship brought us so much discredit. And there were other regimes in need of our progressives' attentions. But now that Iran and South Vietnam have benefited from their meddling, along with Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, Cambodia, and Laos, it is South Africa's turn, and, oh yes, El Salvador's and the Philippines'.

To the sober observer it does appear that over the past twenty years our progressives have made a capital botch of every country on which they have fixed their focus. Their retort is that the botch was not theirs but Washington's. Always our government moved too slowly toward the progressive position. Had Washington come in at the ap-

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pointed hour and imposed reform, a coalition government, a peace agreement, or whatever other nostrum the progressives were prescribing, all would have come out for the better.

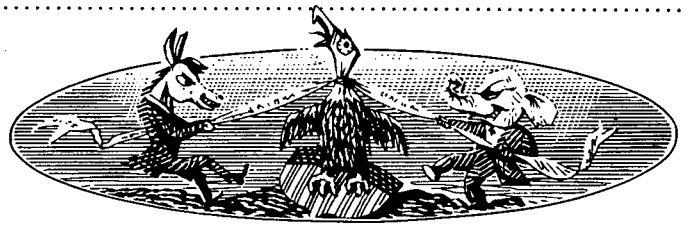
Our reformers have raised the unfalsifiable hypothesis to the level of dogma. History testifies that there is no place under the sun where their prescriptions for reform and peace have brought democracy. If they were truly serious about reform the progressives would still be protesting corruption and tyranny in Southeast Asia, Iran, and Nicaragua. Why do those who were once so fervent in abominating the Shah or the infamous Thieu not now with equal lustiness abominate the Ayatollah or the bamboo politburos? Why do the progressives who call for coalition government in El Salvador not also call for it in Managua where the Communist Sandinistas are being sorely pressed by indigenous Nicaraguans?

In Africa the progressives have set their sights on an unusually disagreeable regime. The Afrikaners have accomplished the rare feat of being at once more self-righteous and stubborn than those Americans now intent on reforming them. Alas, they are also armed to the teeth and immensely capable. Reform might have been in the air before Prime Minister Botha backed away from his moderate statements in 1981, but now the regime is implacable. At any rate, there are areas in Africa where human rights is a far more urgent issue. Consider Ethiopia where a tyrannical regime continues to starve thousands of political opponents and to force misery and death on rural peoples whom it is forcibly relocating despite horrible famine. Let the progressives protest this atrocity. Believing as they do in America's capacity to reform other countries, let them save the starving pawns of Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam's Stalinist *politique*.

If the progressives' prescriptions fail in Ethiopia, America will not have lost influence with a regime strategically important to us. If the progressives' meddling in South Africa brings in the kind of regime now dominant in Iran or Angola, America suffers a geopolitical and strategic disaster. South Africa controls sea lanes of vast naval and commercial importance. Geographically, it is nearly as large as the entire European Economic Community, and a stupendous source of strategic minerals, including 93 percent of NATO's manganese, 81 percent of the world's chrome reserves, 75 percent of platinum, 51 percent of gold, 49 of vanadium, 35 of fluorospar, plus diamonds, uranium, vermiculite, phosphate, zinc, titanium, antimony, and lead.

No friend of democracy is unbothered by South Africa's racial policies, yet our government has pressing problems in the Middle East and in Central America to say nothing of Geneva. South Africa's time will come, but even in Africa there are regimes more hostile to human rights and more susceptible to American power. Ah, but here is the rub: Our progressives are loath to use American power against anti-Western regimes, even weak ones such as Ethiopia. Theirs is a curious game. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



STAR WARS OVER NATO

by Tom Bethell

Imagine a country with a large, heavily armed band of robbers. So ruthless are they that after prolonged debate the citizens conclude that it would be safer to go about unprotected. That way they would indeed be exposed to robbery, but the robbers would refrain from killing them, maybe. That, increasingly, is the West European state of mind today.

There is a mounting West European rebellion against the idea that the West should contemplate defending itself against Soviet missiles by acquiring the capacity to shoot them down. The (London) *Spectator* described a recent Anglo-German conference in which "it was remarkable to find . . . no one who was prepared seriously to defend" the Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars). Evidently officials in European foreign ministries feel safer *vis à vis* the Soviets when exposed to their missiles. Defying the Soviet will is more frightening than exposure to nuclear attack. Arms control negotiations are held out as the only hope; they are comforting because nothing can emerge from them without Soviet approval.

All this tells me that Irving Kristol was right when he wrote in the *New York Times Magazine* (September 1983) that NATO was "sick" and that the U.S. should pull out of it. NATO today is surely sicker than he thought. Kristol could hardly have anticipated this latest show of weakness from our pathetic allies. Within a year or so, I suspect, the crisis of NATO will have come to a head.

My own suspicions about the Western alliance were aroused a few years ago by an Anthony Lewis column—that excellent early warning indicator of trouble. Shortly after President Reagan's election Lewis wrote in the *New York Times*: "Marshal Shulman, until recently the adviser on Soviet affairs to the Secretary of State, put it on 'Meet the Press' today that the aim [of U.S. foreign policy] must be not to let any daylight show between the United States and its European allies."

Shulman/Lewis were by implication advocating that the direction of the alliance should be subordinated to its unity. It doesn't matter if we go over the edge of the cliff as long as there is no daylight between us as we go.

The practical effect of Shulman's policy was to put European hands on the American steering wheel. The metaphor of a naval convoy suggests itself. The United States is safer if it huddles close to the West European freighters. Convoys, of course, must proceed at the speed of the slowest ship. The metaphor of "no daylight" prescribes a loss of sovereignty in the innocuous guise of unity.

This same danger to the United States now looms much larger with the advent of Star Wars. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger has inexplicably, and I believe unwisely, invited the allies to participate in Star Wars research. (This will amount to giving them the fruits of our research, since their own contribution may be expected to be meager; and of course the opportunities for them to leak this research to the Soviets will be numerous.)

The following scenario is probable, as I see it. After much grumbling the West Europeans will agree to be the recipients of our research, perhaps contributing a few scraps of data on their own. Thereupon they will proclaim their right to block deployment of Star Wars, which they will by then regard as a joint project. As William Drozdiak put it in a Bonn-datelined story in the *Washington Post*:

> Senior chancellery officials said Kohl's call for a joint European approach to SDI reflected his conviction that the allies would gain a greater voice in ultimate decisions on deploying space-based systems if they

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became actively involved in the research phase.

This story appeared under the headline: "Kohl: Europeans Need Joint 'Star Wars' Stand. Unity Seen Boosting Influence on Project." (Readers, I beg you: Whenever you see the words "unity" or "joint" or appeals to the "unity of the alliance," please think of cliffs, the Gadarene swine, and Anthony Lewis.)

The European objections to Star Wars are so flimsy that they clearly mask something else—dread of the Soviet Moloch. A separate article could be written on this point, but it is worth noting *en passant* that what intimidates the Europeans is not so much weaponry as it is the Soviets' militant justification of their totalitarian system in ideological terms. Most Europeans —and of course many Americans— know that they would be quite incapable of mustering a comparable fervor on behalf of the far more civilized values by which they are governed. Even to draw attention to the intensely aggressive, accusatory character of Soviet Communism has itself become a taboo in the West. We prefer to delude ourselves with the falsehood that the Soviets "don't really mean what they say."

Here is the most frequently heard European objection to Star Wars (in the words of James Markham of the *New York Times*): "If the Soviet Union tries to match the American system, both Britain's and France's costly independent nuclear forces would be rendered impotent and obsolescent."

Embedded in this odd argument are the following assumptions about the Soviet Union: Basically its rulers are statesmanlike and responsible, and so the Soviet Union would never acquire Star Wars on its own. But such heroic forbearance cannot be expected to survive our own rash acquisition of the latest playthings from the military-industrial complex. The copycats in the Kremlin will prevail over such statesmen as Gorbachev ("New Star Strides Onto World Stage"—*Washington Post* front page headline, April 8), and lo and behold, the Soviets will have Star Wars and then the British and the French nuclear deterrents will be obsolete. So let us not provoke them into acquiring it!

The truth of course is that the Soviets are hard at work already on their own Star Wars, have been for years, and will not hesitate to deploy a defensive system when they get the requisite technology. If the Soviets acquire new weapons systems after we do, it is because they are technologically backward, not because they are virtuous. They are without question behind in the computer field that is crucial to the success of Star Wars.

The second European anti-Star Wars argument is: If we go forward with it, the Soviets might torpedo the arms talks in Geneva! Hard to believe that anyone could be worried about this, I know, but it is a fact that the Europeans place greater faith in arms control by diplomacy—despite the vast multiplication of arms and weapons systems since the arms control "process" began 16 years ago—than they do in arms elimination by technology. This is also the State Department position (remember, we joined the arms control talks to mollify the Europeans in the first place), and it also happens to be Jimmy Carter's position. Jimmy was quoted the other day as saying that Star Wars creates an "almost insuperable obstacle" to arms control agreements.

In other words, the Soviet negotiators at Geneva will agree, magnanimously, to reduce their nuclear missiles—but only if we agree not to acquire the means to shoot down the ones they keep. And this is the bind that Reagan has placed himself in by

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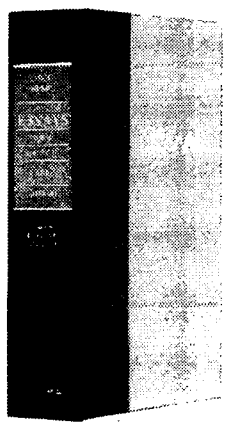

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so unwisely agreeing to return to Geneva. Sooner or later the Soviets will indeed propose just such a deal: a large-sounding reduction of their missiles if we in return agree to abandon Star Wars. (The nuclear "overkill" already in their possession will enable them to do this without reducing the military threat that they pose to us.)

Here we may let Drozdiak once again pick up the story ("NATO Allies' Concerns Fuel Debate on Star Wars," April 4, *Washington Post*):

> One concern among European allies is that at some point in the talks the Soviets will propose to reduce both long-range and intermediate-range missiles in exchange for severe constraints on the SDI program. If the Europeans find such an offer appealing but the Americans turn it down, a NATO official said, "that's when all hell will break loose in the alliance over SDI. It will make the quarreling over deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles look like a love feast."

The offer will be made and will be found appealing in Bonn, London, and Paris, and at that point (to exaggerate) Reagan can either give up Star Wars or he can give up NATO—a choice he could have avoided by staying away from Geneva.

Norman Podhoretz, the editor of *Commentary*, has opposed Kristol on the NATO issue. Bearing in mind the latest displays of European pusillanimity, I phoned Podhoretz to see if he had changed his mind. He declared himself "disgusted" by the European response, but still committed to NATO. Weak as they are, he believes that our allies are "holding us hostage" because if we were to abandon them they would soon be Finlandized. "Then the pressures on us—not so much military as cultural and spiritual—would be enormous," he said. "You'd see Soviet-American friendship societies taking over book parties."

In other words, he added, "Trotsky was right." Just as you can't have Communism in one country, so you can't have democracy in one country. "You would have an international environment utterly uncongenial to the maintenance of American institutions, or free institutions generally."

Owen Harries, the former Australian ambassador to UNESCO who is preparing to launch a new foreign policy magazine in Washington, points to the inverse pattern of optimism and pessimism displayed by Kristol and Podhoretz. (Harries himself comes down on Kristol's side.) "Kristol is pessimistic about Europe and optimistic about America," Harries said. "Podhoretz is pessimistic about America and optimistic about Europe."

Podhoretz entertains the hope that with our continued succor, Europe still might see the light, repair its defenses, and resolutely resist the Soviets. But surely the feeble European response to Star Wars suggests that this is not now likely to happen; suggests, in fact, that the Finlandization of Europe is proceeding apace under the present dispensation. Perhaps, as a result, we might conclude that our own excessively protracted support of Europe has itself contributed to its spiritual debilitation; just as U.S. welfare has undermined its recipients; and just as excessively generous U.S. economic aid is today threatening the well-being of Israel.

When Europe is considered in this light—not as the beneficiary but as the unintended victim of misguided American generosity—Kristol emerges as the optimist both about America and Europe. If we subject our allies to what he has called the "shock treatment" of withdrawal, then maybe they will be restored to health. If not, then we may feel sure that the patient would have died anyway. In any event, we should get out of the sick room as soon as possible. The more daylight between us and the patient, the less likely we are to become infected. □

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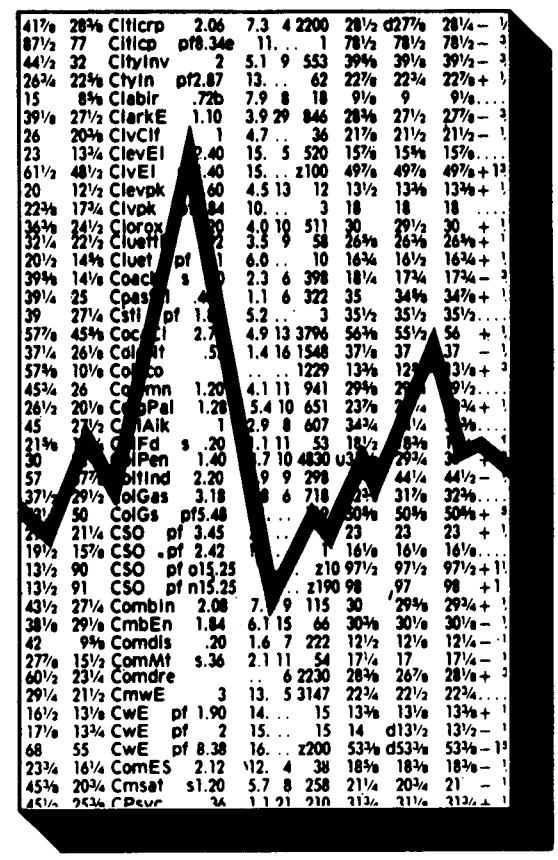

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Yale and Rita Kramer

THE SHRINKING OF AMERICA

Dr. Lifton and his colleagues would like to correct your political thoughts.

We were, of course, upset when we received the announcement. The very name—Union of Concerned Psychoanalysts and Psychotherapists—generated tiny waves of reproach. Only one of us was a psychoanalyst, but neither of us had ever missed an opportunity to vote. Every morning we clucked and nodded to each other over the op-ed page, spent many of our evening hours with the current *New York Review*, the *TLS*, the *New Republic*, and then the Macneil/Lehrer report. And if there was any doubt or uncertainty left we turned to hard-hitting Ted Koppel on "Nightline." Still, apparently we had fallen short, failed some unspoken moral test. There were others—analysts—more concerned, more responsible than we, who had found each other and formed a union and hadn't even thought of us.

The announcement generously invited even those who had not yet reached the minimal standard of Concern to "explore with 'Nuclear Insiders' and Psychological Analysts the Dynamics of Nuclear Numbness."

Here, we thought, was an opportunity to repair our social dereliction, perhaps even be accepted into the ranks of the UCPP. Of course we would go, and in the bargain learn a thing or two about the dynamics of Nuclear Numbness, which, we acknowledged, we probably had a bad case of.

Thus we presented ourselves at the entrance to the Ethical Culture Society auditorium one Sunday afternoon in March and were told that to learn about Nuclear Numbness we would have to pay fifteen dollars apiece. Instantly we felt less numb. But, realizing what a small price it was to pay for our moral backsliding, we paid up and slunk into the auditorium.

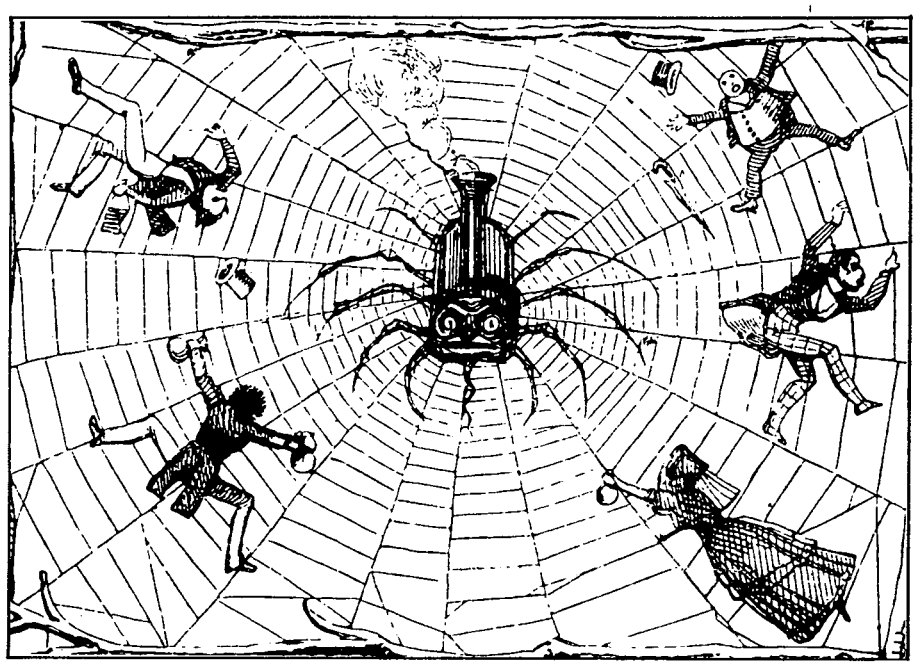
The somber wood-paneled hall was half filled with people—hushed, as before a religious ceremony, and all wearing heavy drab clothing. That stood to reason, we told each other—drabness was a way of expressing concern. One of us touched the luxurious cashmere of his turtleneck sweater uncomfortably. He should have known better, the other chided.

Waiting for the program to begin we watched the panelists assembling onstage, shaking hands with solemn nods, and wondered about the name the group had chosen. Most groups identify themselves geographically—the New York Medical Society—or by interest—the Modern Language Association—or by profession—the Society of Gastrointestinal Assistants. Or, if the group is political, the name is punchy and right up front—Plumbers for Mondale. The criteria for membership are more or less clear—if you're a plumber and for Mondale, you're in. But this was a little different. How did they know whether you had the right stuff or not? As we looked timidly about, we wondered whether we could tell the more Concerned from the less Concerned Analysts. We nodded approvingly at the thin worried man across the aisle already taking notes even though the program hadn't started.

The chairs on the stage were all occupied now and only the obligatory fussing with the microphones was left. The auditorium was filling up and we noticed, looking down on us all, a huge bas-relief wood carving depicting a depressed-looking man being helped by a bearded fellow in a cloak and sandals and holding a staff. We wondered whether this was the prescribed garb of the Concerned Analyst, and realized how far one of us had fallen.

Powerfully amplified throat-clearing heralded the beginning of the program, and we were told that we were particularly fortunate that afternoon in having with us the Honorary President of the UCPP, Dr. Robert Jay Lifton. Applause.

We had been wrong about the Concerned Analysts' official dress. Dr. Lifton was apparently our model. A big confident man with a genial smile, he was jacketless and wore a plaid shirt with a western kerchief around his neck, Teddy Roosevelt style. One of us made a mental note.



Like Caesar, he disavowed his leadership, but proceeded anyway to rouse us with the declaration that he was an anti-nuclear warrior. Dr. Lifton was clearly a born leader and politician because his words were full of conviction and import. It was inspiring to hear him as he chopped away at the air in front of him. At first we thought he would leave the petty stuff—the psychological dynamics—to the less Concerned panelists and give us political direction and thrust, anti-nuclear warrior that he was. "We have to show and articulate exactly how this particular program [Star Wars/SDI] commits us to an unending arms race. I think it is in our purview and task as psychological professionals to demonstrate this in a variety of ways."

How, how? we wondered, but Dr. Lifton didn't want to blunt the depth of his analysis with trivial details. He went on, "It's interesting that one hears now that the idea of being a supporter of SDI is equated with loyalty to the Administration. It sounds like a routine political matter, which in a way it is, but that's the hell of it psychologically speaking. Ordinary loyalties are in no way altered in structure by a particular project that could eliminate everything." We puzzled for a moment about the full meaning of Dr. Lifton's insight, but were swept along by his personal magnetism.

" . . . Finally a last thought about this. Ourselves. Most of us are professionals in psychological areas. Of course, it's a given now that we have the obligation now to address these issues with whatever knowledge we have from our traditions, from our professions. . . .

"I look forward," Dr. Lifton concluded with a broad smile, "to hearing the discussion today." And as though he hadn't quite heard himself he picked

Yale Kramer, M.D. is a psychoanalyst and Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Rutgers Medical School. Rita Kramer's most recent book is In Defense of the Family *(Basic Books).*

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up his coat, walked up the aisle, and disappeared.

"Hey, wait," one of us wanted to call out. "You were looking forward to the discussion." But he probably would have answered, "Listen, I've got other groups whose discussions I look forward to. You're not the only Concerned Union around, you know." And surely he'd be right, we told each other with a guilty shrug.

As the first panelist pulled the microphone toward himself, we rubbed our hands together. Now for the psychology. We sat forward in our seats.

This began with the president of the UCPP, a lay psychoanalyst, Dr. Ernest Angel. Dr. Angel asked himself why people don't take to the streets in protest—only a push button away from the total annihilation of humanity. It can only be, he concluded, a psychological defense, a symptom known as denial. They are numbed, and that is why they do not react more strongly to the prospect of "man-made universal holocaust" hanging over them. "I told you this would be deep stuff," one of us said. "But I didn't realize it would be this deep."

Only the young, Dr. Angel went on, are clear-sighted enough to perceive "an invisible mushroom cloud between them and all of their future." Dr. Angel was sure that if people were not somehow blinded by denial, numbed by habit, "there would have been an election landslide in the reverse direction." He went on, equating the two superpowers, "two giants interlocked in a struggle in which they have lost all sense of priorities, making a mutual contribution to evil, equally at fault in distrusting each other," and then ticked off nonchalantly some really deep dynamics like "cosmic fatalism" and "the wish for merger with super macho power" in the populace, and suggested that President Reagan was the victim of a childlike belief that the good would be spared in the event of nuclear disaster.

If Dr. Angel's prognosis left us with little to hope for, Dr. Chaim Shatan, a clinical professor at NYU, really shook us up. First of all, he identified himself as one of a group of American scientists fighting "the whole madness" of the arms race who believe that *nothing* is proof against nuclear attack. It followed, of course, that the only thing to do was to disarm completely. Dr. Shatan also believes the "defense" (in the psychological sense) of avoidance keeps people from facing the unpalatable realities that deterrence is a myth, that our government lies, and that all attempts at defense measures (in the military sense) are futile.

Like the doctor called in to give the family the bad news, Dr. Shatan was there to tell us the worst. The sickness is in *us*! Unrelenting, he went on. We're not defending ourselves against any outside threat. The real enemy is the U.S. defense industry. The real threat comes from our own weapons technologists. But, he reassured us, with proper treatment there may be hope. "We [the Concerned Psychoanalysts and Psychotherapists] know how to uncover the hidden reality." What this therapy will do is reveal the lies of government and the silence of the masses, "unmask the true forms behind the pseudo-reality." Leaders and followers are both in the grip of "the military myth." Not to see this is tantamount to denial, not in the rational but in the pathological sense.

"It's interesting that one hears now that the idea of being a supporter of SDI is equated with loyalty to the Administration. It sounds like a routine political matter, which in a way it is, but that's the hell of it psychologically speaking."

Dr. Shatan's colleague, Dr. Zvi Lothane, then expressed his Concern and added to ours. He too believed that not thinking about nuclear Armageddon every moment is "apathy" and a sign of mental illness. He too exhorted us to learn the lessons of history. What history teaches Dr. Lothane is that the United States today is like Hitler's Germany. And what Concerned Psychotherapists must do is make the masses aware of the propaganda and outright lies of their leaders, "get behind the scenes psychologically on what is happening behind the closed doors of the political decision-makers." With a straight face Dr. Lothane suggested that women might follow the example of Lysistrata and go on strike, as he put it, in order to influence arms policy.

Like the pro-freeze physicists who have had so much recent media exposure, self-styled mental-health professionals have begun to enter the nuclear-policy debate, degrading the valid use of psychological terms and concepts and cheapening the efforts of those professionals who use them in legitimate ways. The assumption that psychoanalysts, psychotherapists—Concerned or Unconcerned—or for that matter any other members of the so-called behavioral sciences could provide any understanding or knowledge that would be relevant to the issues of Realpolitik or modern warfare is wishful thinking at best and, at worst, manipulative mischief on the part of sophisticated people who should and probably do know better.

However one wishes to characterize the large group of arts and disciplines derived from the biological, psychological, and social sciences (more generally the behavioral sciences; more narrowly—those with a clinical or therapeutic orientation—the mental health professions), none of them individually or collectively has reached a level of sophistication that would merit its application to the affairs of mankind as a whole.

Even those that are the most practically oriented—psychoanalysis and its derivative psychotherapies—are severely limited in their application. They work best in clinical situations in which the practitioner is well trained and highly experienced, and in which an individual patient is highly motivated toward introspection and self-revelation, and in which both can agree that the patient has some significant degree of psychological abnormality. Now for Drs. Angel or Shatan or Lifton to assert or imply that it is possible to understand or know the motivations of anyone who is not their acknowledged patient, suggests a degree of ignorance or deception that is incompatible with standards of professional ethics and competence. They suggested over and over again that they had special knowledge and understanding of "the masses," of nuclear scientists, of the President and his advisers, in short, of people they don't know, and have never known. Over and over again they suggested that the electorate is sick because it voted for Reagan and his Star Wars program, and that the scientists who work on nuclear weapons are functioning according to some pathological dynamic. Mental health, it appears, consists in sharing their political beliefs—pacifist, pro-unilateral disarmament, and anti-Reagan.

There is no place in psychoanalysis (or its derived psychotherapies) for politics. Psychoanalysis is the art-science of unconscious intra-psychic conflict—not inter-personal conflict. It is useful only in the context of personal emotional life and misery. It has as yet little or no explanatory or therapeutic power with respect to existential sources of human unhappiness—traffic jams, air pollution, poverty, war, famine. Alas, some misguided individuals—naive or poorly trained analysts included—have the notion that psychoanalysis can (and therefore should) affect these ubiquitous evils, not so much directly, but through some process of thought-correction (brainwashing?). These individuals often talk as though a "really successfully" analyzed patient would become morally and socially transformed, shedding his three-piece suit like a caterpillar and becoming a yogurt-making vegetarian and registered Democrat.

Of course, psychoanalysis doesn't work that way at all. The point of analysis is not to inculcate values but to free an individual's normal functions from misery and inhibition, whether that individual is a poet or a four-star general. Freud himself knew that psychoanalysis could not and should not be made into a moral or political program, and resisted attempts to misuse its discoveries for such purposes. In 1932 he answered the question definitively: "Psychoanalysis, in my opinion, is incapable of creating a *Weltanschauung* of its own. It does not need one; it is part of science and can adhere to the scientific *Weltanschauung*. This, however, scarcely deserves such a grandiloquent title, for it is not all-comprehensive, it is too incomplete and makes no claim to being self-contained and to the construction of systems. . . . There are too many of the great problems which it has not yet been able to solve." Concerned Analysts take note.

Dr. Lifton is one of the honorary leaders of a vast army of so-called "mental health professionals" with extremely varied backgrounds (nurses, teachers, counselors, therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, analysts, and probably professionals we haven't heard of yet), and the quality of whose training is also extremely varied (mostly poor, since there are many trainees and in mental health, as in other fields of education, there are very few first-rate training institutions). Despite the modesty of their experience and training many of them are outspoken advocates of this or that social or political issue, and since the press is usually undiscriminating about what it swallows and regurgitates to the public, the views of this group tend to get rather wide dissemination. Thus, despite the limitations in the quality of their thought, in the public mind they come to speak for the mental health establishment as a whole.

This group purveys a hodgepodge of theory (if one can call it theory—

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perhaps opinion would describe it more accurately) and practice which is only very loosely connected with Freud's ideas. The two psychological notions which dominate the social, political, and, no doubt, the clinical perspective of this cadre of Concerned mental health workers are, however, not only *not* derived from Freud's theories but if anything anti-analytic. The first is that aggression and all its derivatives are pathological, and the second is that the primary causes of serious mental illness are social.

Freud himself knew that psychoanalysis could not and should not be made into a moral or political program, and resisted attempts to misuse its discoveries for such purposes.

Freud has never been popular with the left despite the fact that many who claim to be analysts, and especially Concerned Analysts, share a *Weltanschauung* that looks left rather than right. During the rise of the New Left in the late sixties and seventies psychoanalysis was at its lowest point in the ebb and flow of cultural fashion. Over- and under-privileged youth looked to social protest or drugs as solutions to the ubiquitous existential evils they saw—war, prejudice, injustice, poverty. In retrospect it is easy to see that many of these young people got their personal misery mixed up with social misery and tried to find solutions for one in the pursuit of the other. But it was heady stuff then—exciting, highly pleasurable springtime communions with promise of magical cures for all.

In all this, what did psychoanalysis have to offer to unhappy over-privileged youth? Solitary soul-searching; dreary, endless entrapment. No contest. Psychoanalysis was not part of the solution, so it became part of the problem.

Even in the training of young psychiatrists the wave of social orientation was felt. In the old days the best and the brightest of the young psychiatrists sought analytic training, and the best training programs were, for the most part, psychoanalytically oriented. With the seventies—the golden age of social psychiatry—this changed. Applications to psychoanalytic institutes fell off, the country was divided into catchments like one colossal sewage map, and storefront psychiatric clinics were opened in every low-income community. Young doctors took off their ties and white coats, put on sandals, and proclaimed, "We are all equals—doctors, nurses, aides, patients," confusing already confused patients even more. But no matter, the Great Silliness was upon the land in those exciting days. No stuffy consulting rooms, no soul-searching leading to self-doubt and political inaction, no hospitalization because it *discriminated* against the mentally ill, and deprived them of their civil rights. Now one can see the chronically ill exercising their civil right to shuffle aimlessly through freezing city winters, shouting at the inner voices and visions that plague them.

But the hostility between psychoanalysis and the left goes back further than the last decade, although few analysts remember or acknowledge this. Freud himself had always been skeptical of Marxist assumptions about human nature and deeply scornful of Bolshevik methods. The Bolsheviks in turn were equally intolerant of Freud. The *Short Philosophic Dictionary*, the authoritative statement of the Party line in Russia, states that Freudism (sic) is "a reactionary idealistic trend widespread in bourgeois psychological science . . . now in the service of imperialism which utilizes these 'teachings' for the purpose of justifying and developing the basest and most repellent instinctual tendencies."

The Bolsheviks were right to give Freud a bad review, but they did it for the wrong reasons. It wasn't Freud's unsavory sexual theories, as the quotation above suggests, that were inimical to Marxist theory, but the importance of *individual* psychology in the affairs of men, and further, that this had its roots in the biology and early development of the individual—that is, it was *pre*-political, *pre*-economic. By then Freud's work had given rise to the understanding, now beyond doubt, that developmental vicissitudes in the life of a child—rich or poor, capitalist or worker—have powerful effects in distributing the goods and ills of mankind. To put it in a nutshell, maternal depression is probably more important in shaping a child's later life than economic depression.

Where the analyst looks inward to the source of human misery, the Marxist and the social psychiatrist look outward. A man complaining to his analyst that he has lost his job for the third time will be told as tactfully as possible that he has some unwitting need to engage in self-defeating behavior and that he must understand how and why he does this *to himself*. The same man who consults a social psychiatrist will be asked if he has applied for his unemployment insurance, reassured that it is nothing to be ashamed of, and asked if he has written his congressman to protest the intolerable conditions of job insecurity in his profession. To a Marxist or social psychiatrist alienation is connected with working conditions and who owns the means of production. To an analyst alienation also has to do with ambivalence, paranoia, and guilt.

Unfortunately, during the silliness of the seventies those in the mental health field whose *Weltanschauung* was consonant with Marxism concerning the sources of human misery—social causes, social cures—sold the rest of us, the public and policy-makers alike, a bill of goods. Always on the attack, always vocal, media oriented, their rhetoric ringing with high moral tones, they proclaimed that society was to blame—for mental illness, for drug addiction, for the crime in our cities. Unemployment was to blame. Poverty was to blame. If the poor won't come to the clinics, bring the clinics to the poor.

And we bought this prescription of word magic and snake oil at a cost of countless millions of dollars and man hours of paper-shuffling and administrative musical chairs. The net result was the re-invention of old-fashioned social work (now called "community psychiatry"), except that now it was done by the doctors because the social workers had all gone into the private practice of psychotherapy; and the main beneficiary of this re-orientation in psychiatry was the vast bureaucracy of so-called mental health professionals with a written and unwritten agenda of social policies, most of them unexamined and possibly as wasteful and misguided as those tried in the past.

The fact is that poverty doesn't cause crime. That's slogan thinking. What society calls crime is an act committed by an individual with an individual mind in an individual brain and body generating individual motivations. As the tiniest amount of thought will suggest, it makes no more sense to say poverty causes crime than it does to say that wealth causes crime when one tries to explain the criminal activities of businessmen or senators. Most poor people would never allow themselves to commit a crime and some rich people commit them all the time—drug dealers, for example. (The net worth of many drug dealers and Mafiosi is greater than that of most CEOs.)

The profit motive may indeed be one important factor among the many causes of crime, but it is certainly a naive notion that like Jean Valjean the poor commit crimes for sustenance and survival. As anyone who has tried to work with recidivist criminals can tell you, they don't want jobs, and undermine all attempts to provide them with work. In fact they are contemptuous of all those who do work. (As the juvenile delinquent puts it in *West Side Story*: "Dear kindly social worker/They say go earn some dough/Like be a soda jerker/Which means like be a schmo/It's not I'm anti-social/I'm only anti-work/Glorioski, that's why I'm a jerk.")

What about mental illness? Does poverty cause mental illness as the social psychiatrists claim? If anything, the reverse is true. One has only to study closely the behavior of chronically ill mental patients for a short time

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to know why mental illness causes poverty. Such patients are largely unable to meet the complex demands of the marketplace without breaking down. Thus they can only perform the simplest tasks or more complex ones in sheltered workplaces such as eleemosynary institutions, where realistic demands for productivity are tailored to their needs.

When Freud made his famous remark that the aim of psychoanalysis was merely to transform neurotic misery into everyday unhappiness, he asserted a powerful conceptual distinction, a profound truth which transcends class and country. It is a truth which goes against the grain of human nature. No one wants to own up to the authorship of his misery. We all want to curse our fate. "I'm miserable because I'm poor—or black or Jewish or female or short or ugly—and society despises me for it."

It's human nature and these are mental mechanisms everyone uses. But social psychiatrists exploit them and want to blur the distinction that psychoanalysis insists on—that the discontents of civilized man (and woman) are not completely but to a significant degree intra-psychic, internal, and not all out there in the real rotten world.

Because of the tendency in human nature to blur this distinction, and because of an active and highly vocal army of snake oil salespersons who have a vested ideological interest in denying this distinction, unsophisticated policy-makers and congressmen are often inveigled into investing in large-scale programs that can yield only disappointment, waste, and more bureaucracy.

Closely connected with the *Weltanschauung* that asserts that mankind's miseries are socially induced and that therefore they can be cured socially is another false god worshipped by the salvation psychiatrists, Concerned Analysts, and their followers—the notion that all aggression is pathological, and thus war and those who contemplate it or participate in any activity which is connected with it are "crazy," "mad," "psychotic," "paranoid."

In other forms, of course, this idea has had a long history in Western culture. It is an ideal that dominates the Judeo-Christian religions and the philosophies that derive from them, and as such it seems perfectly harmless, since no Judeo-Christian community has ever taken it seriously as a guide for conduct where its own interests were at stake. Indeed, most wars and scourges over the last two thousand years have been conducted in the name of God in his/her various forms. Nonetheless, ideals do serve a useful social purpose and help inspire men (persons) to restrain self-interest and behave better than they naturally would.

Of late, however, this idea has been dressed up in a white coat, a beard, and specs and peddled as scientific. To be sure, the "scientific discussions" presented by the Concerned Analysts that Sunday afternoon used pseudo-psychiatric "diagnoses" openly in the service of moral and political rhetoric. This phenomenon reflects a mischievous tendency to use unexamined assumptions from psychological and psychiatric contexts for political purposes. Rhetoric aside, there runs through discussions of nuclear disarmament and pacifism increasingly since the seventies the implicit notion that all forms of aggression are not only "bad" but pathological, that those who suffer from it are "sick" or "infantile" or "immature," and that only those who are free of aggression (except when it comes to nuclear disarmament) and whose actions are informed by love are "normal," "mature." (To make matters more complex, this notion has coalesced and commingled with ideas like "macho" and "jock" and "sexist"—masculine caricatures—to give rise finally to stereotypical madmen and rednecks like those so brilliantly realized in the film *Dr. Strangelove*.)

Where the analyst looks inward to the source of human misery, the Marxist and the social psychiatrist look outward.

Aggression is an acknowledged fact of psychological life. It is a normal and necessary part of development and its derivatives play an important part in all aspects of normal life. One cannot be a normal parent without it; one cannot have a normal sex life without it; one cannot pursue happiness without it, or enjoy humor or appreciate art, or engage in commerce. It is at the heart of zest and vitality in civilized life. It is expressed consciously and unconsciously in thousands of ways, some more subtle than others and for the most part socially acceptable. Some men will gratify their aggressive needs by hunting, some by playing football, some by staging righteously indignant protests at nuclear disarmament rallies.

The aggressive drive and its components in human beings—ambition, self-interest, greed, envy, jealousy, acquisitiveness—are ubiquitous from infancy to old age. And although in various degrees of excess they may be considered, by some, evil or vicious, their presence in individuals is not pathological unless they give rise to significant amounts of emotional discomfort, psychological impairment, or self-destructive behavior. (To extend the definition of pathology much beyond this is to enter the sphere of Soviet Psychiatry.) Normally we all struggle with these emotions as best we can, helped immeasurably by the institutions of our respective cultures—"the sense of the community," religion, consensual ethical principles. But it is folly of the worst sort to deny the universality of these impulses in ourselves and our enemies.

Whatever the Concerned Analysts' qualifications as psychologists, it is clear that they did not major in history. Their view of the world situation is unequivocal. It is one in which ambitious scientists sell their diabolical ideas for new weapons systems to a gullible President, and in which the threat of war comes not from outside our own country but from our paranoid attempts to defend ourselves against an imagined threat and the possibility that we will, like careless children, drop one of those superfluous megaton weapons on the rest of an innocent humanity.

Over and over again they referred to Santayana's historical dictum. Ah, yes, but *which* lessons of history? It was difficult to believe that these men, all old enough to remember the years between the two world wars, were not aware that the second of them was the consequence not of a policy of deterrence or a tough stance in the face of threats but of backing down—of pacifism and disarmament and a tragic misjudgment of the lengths to which the unchecked leaders of totalitarian powers would finally go.

It was still quite light when we stepped out onto Central Park West, and the stinging March wind seemed to rouse us as we stepped northward through the park at a brisk pace. "Thirty bucks," one of us grumbled. "Was it worth it?" The other shrugged. "At least we know for sure now."

"Oh yeah, what?" A grim-faced jogger huffed past.

"That they don't know anything that anyone else doesn't know."

"That's not worth thirty dollars. A buck and a half, maybe."

Concerned Analysts, social psychiatrists, behavioral scientists—whatever they wish to call themselves—have no special knowledge that can have a bearing on the great issues of war and peace in the modern world, because the decision to have war or peace has to do with values and not facts or theories of how the world works—even the world of the mind. In the end, the only relevant question is whether the majority of the electorate believe that something they possess is *worth* fighting for. And in a pluralistic democracy it is the political process and not the testimony of experts or the morally superior that decides.

Coming on a bed of crocuses suddenly, one of us mumbled, "Spring—it's the silly season again." □

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Matthew Stevenson

OLD SOUTH AFRICA

Will its example be *Brown* v. *Board of Education* or Sherman's march to the sea?

Johannesburg could be an American city. The Carlton Centre, one of the better hotels, has an observation deck similar to those atop monoliths across the United States. From the hotel rooftop, the streets below spread out like an inner-city fortress. The perimeter is a moat of expressways, the gates being the cloverleafs at each of the four corners. Inside these fast-moving, six-lane city walls is a familiar downtown, evocative of Dallas or Denver. The glass exteriors of the office buildings shimmer in the prairie sun. Across the tracks the department stores, judged by suburban standards, look a little shabby. There is the forlorn sense, even during the day, that this is a place where people work and shop, but don't live.

The city's power, and, by extension, that of white South Africa, comes from the gold on which Johannesburg literally sits. Like Aztec ruins, heaps of golden residue are piled throughout the city that was founded as a campsite during the 1885 rush. Operating mines can still be found in the suburbs, and it is not an exaggeration to say that Johannesburg's pulse can be taken from the quotes bid and asked on the London or New York exchanges. It is this modern skyline rising from the Transvaal plain that gives South Africa a sense of might and invulnerability. It seems to have conquered a number of frontiers. During a conversation on the possibility of change, a leader from one of the opposition groups pointed toward the colossus and said to me: "How's anyone going to overthrow that?"

In recent months, however, the specter of rebellion has hovered over South Africa. Since September, more than 200 blacks and one white have died in riots, clashes with the police, or random violence. When I decided to go there, the decision was received among friends and acquaintances with reservation, if not hostility. At a dinner in New York before I left, an angry woman said: "I can understand your wanting to go to Africa. But not South Africa. Go to Kenya. Go look at wild animals. Anything but South Africa." But the purpose of the trip was not to go on safari. I wanted to judge for myself a country I knew second-hand from books, headlines, and the silhouettes that are often shown on television.

The trip began with a seemingly endless flight that crossed the Atlantic to Cape Town and then continued northeast, over prairie like the American West, to Johannesburg. After arriving, I was free to go where I pleased. Technically, the black township of Soweto was off-limits to visitors, especially foreigners, whose safety was questioned because of the continuing violence. But that didn't prevent me from talking to blacks or from visiting the township so synonymous with black life in South Africa. The trip ended with a walk at the water's edge at the Cape of Good Hope. I departed with the sense that instead of being a world apart—some underground set aside for evil practices—South Africa's society bears similarities to our own. I left also firm in the belief that its cures lie in greater contact with the West, especially the United States, rather than in isolation. As the former editor of the *Johannesburg Star* said one afternoon: "Cut us off more and we'll become even queerer than we are now."

With introductions ahead of time—from sources as discrete as South African diplomats and black dissidents living in exile—I was able to meet a number of persons whose lives are in politics—be it through the government, writing, or in the churches. Both blacks and whites in the country have the sense of living under an occupation, and the Vichy-like atmosphere has produced a political discourse as vibrant as in any state of siege. In many of these conversations, the common ground was speculation over whether apartheid would end with a whimper or a bang. Would the precedent be *Brown* v. *Board of Education* or Sherman's march to the sea?

In my time in South Africa, I did not become an expert on U.S. investment policy or African tribal politics, but I was fortunate to meet two men, Beyers Naude and Alan Paton, whose lives have already shaped the course of the country's history. On returning, I came in contact with Desmond Tutu. So much of what South Africa was for me is summed up in these three voices, all in the opposition, telling the experiences of an Afrikaner, a British descendant, and a black.

For anyone arriving at Jan Smuts Airport, South Africa begins as a tale of two cities. Neither Johannesburg nor its black satellite, Soweto, could exist without the other. Nor could the residents, who are bound together in one of the many symbiotic twists of apartheid. The essence of the system that legally separates whites from blacks emerges in this most unlikely pair of sister cities.

What comes as unexpected is that, by day, Johannesburg is a black city. Whites go downtown to file themselves away in the office buildings, but the blacks come to be on the streets: to work as laborers, to shop, to sit motionless in the parks, as if posing for the camera of Walker Evans.

Under the laws of apartheid, which isn't one but many acts of parliament, blacks in the Johannesburg area must live in the township that, even on a clear day, is only faintly visible from the Carlton. But the shopping, like everything else in Soweto, is meager, even for food. So beginning before dawn, trains and buses from Soweto start to ferry blacks into the city for their work or shopping. An unforgettable scene, worthy of the pen of Dickens or the eye of Daumier, is that of railway carriages jammed with blacks as they pull into the platforms at Johannesburg station. One imagines the passengers, wedged together in silence, to be fleeing some catastrophe instead of making their everyday commute.

The shopping district is a postcard of an American southern city before integration. Few buildings are taller than two stories, and the blocks are a grid as you would find in Memphis or Birmingham. On the sidewalks a

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number of blacks still step aside to let a white person pass. In certain situations some of the older black men doff their straw hats. The city operates two bus systems, one each for whites and blacks. The few whites who rely on public transportation ride brand-new Leyland double-decker buses in which the air conditioning works and it's easy to get a seat. The buses for blacks look twenty years old, are covered with dirt and exhaust, and even at odd hours appear packed, as though they were transporting migrant workers through California.

In the evening Johannesburg has a curfew. By 10 p.m., like grounded teenagers, all blacks must be off the streets and presumably back in Soweto. Hence, beginning in the late afternoon, the Styxian trains and buses reverse the directions that they ply in the mornings. What is remarkable—to an American visitor—is how compliant most blacks are with the conditions of apartheid. No police with nightsticks are needed to enforce this lockup. In fact, the evening rush hour would appear normal if everyone leaving from the station's underbelly weren't black. When the last train departs, however, the city of gold becomes a ghost town.

For a white visitor, there are several ways to get to Soweto, and all have qualities of the absurd. "Sowetour" is a government-sponsored bus company that drives tourists around the nicer sections of the township, which envelops 100 square miles and has a population greater than 1.5 million, making it one of the largest cities in Africa. The flyer advertising the tour shows an air-conditioned Mercedes coach. The accompanying photographs make Soweto appear to be yet another African game park. On the leaflet are phrases like "Book Now" and "Don't Miss This Opportunity." Pictures of houses on the tour show a split-level in a neighborhood called "Beverley Hills." Other pictures of a swimming pool and a band shell give the impression that blacks have chosen to live in Soweto the way retirees might move to Hilton Head.

Those whites wanting to go to Soweto on their own need a pass, which is obtained from a municipal building in Johannesburg. Applying for a pass makes it clear why in the course of a lifetime many whites only encounter blacks as servants or in other menial jobs. With double bulletproof doors at the entrance, the building has the appearance of a headquarters for an army of occupation. Desk-bound officers, wearing pale-green uniforms and expressions of contempt, treat any white requesting a pass as either a traitor or a subversive, perhaps on a gun-running mission. My request for a pass was dismissed with the wave of a hand, as the presiding officer said: "We're not issuing any passes until things settle down." From his intonation it was hard for me to tell if he meant that I would have to wait until the next day or perhaps the next century.

I drove to Soweto in a rented car, without a pass, as things had yet to "settle down." The paper that morning had numerous items on the violence that since last September has fed on the grievances of miners and students, and later on the violence itself. In the newspaper that morning, a typical dispatch began: "In White City Jabavu, Soweto, a delivery van was stoned by about 200 youths who also looted the van. When police arrived at the scene, the youths fled. The driver was injured and the van damaged." Another item read: "A woman sitting in a moving bus was shot in the neck from the street outside a Soweto shop at 5 p.m. yesterday." Nearly all such violence, including the recent shooting of funeral marchers near Port Elizabeth, takes place in the townships, far removed from the white enclaves.

About ten miles from downtown Johannesburg, surrounded by wire fences, Soweto is no more a threat to white South Africa than one of the camps in the Gulag is to the Kremlin. On the main road, at the eastern end of the township, the South African military maintains a base that, at the first hint of trouble, can rapidly deploy troops. A familiar sight in Soweto is an armored personnel carrier, painted the light browns of desert camouflage, on patrol with a squad of white soldiers.

Unlike the slums around New York, which visually are more menacing than Soweto, this one has a rambling, suburban quality. It spreads out across what used to be farmland on the veld, and the clusters of tract housing resemble a misplaced Levittown. But whatever Soweto may have over the South Bronx, it remains a dreary image of tract housing, dirt roads, garbage-strewn lots, and children playing in the roadside squalor. The family I got to know lived in the garage of a four-room house. By local standards they were by no means poor. The husband worked for an American corporation; his wife was a nurse. They had enough money to build their own house, but there was no land available, nor could they get the required bureaucratic approval, even though the South African government is making an effort to improve housing.

In apartheid's grand design, all blacks in South Africa are guest workers. Soweto is the hostel for these migrants, who, in theory, will use it as a bunk room for several years before going back to places like the Ciskei, Lebowa, or Qwaqwa—tracts of land that the South African government has set aside for blacks. In the pronouncements of apartheid, South Africa is for whites; Africans have their own countries. All the races shall be accorded a separate development to preserve languages and cultural diversity—a concept that matches the separate but equal notions of the American South. But as so often happens in partitions, white South Africa got the gold, the diamonds, Cape Town, and the beaches of Durban while blacks were consigned to townships like Soweto or to grazeland that in the arid Newspeak of apartheid becomes an ancestral homeland.

As the former editor of the *Johannesburg Star* said one afternoon: "Cut us off more and we'll become even queerer than we are now."

What struck me first about Beyers Naude, an Afrikaner and a leading critic of the Pretoria government, was his precision. Over the phone, as we were arranging a time to meet, he said, "I have an appointment at nine and another at eleven, so we'll have to meet at ten." Cheerful openness was not what I expected from someone who had been described to me as being under a form of house arrest. The following morning, almost to the minute, there was a knock on the door of my hotel room and in came the cleric who has since replaced Bishop Tutu as the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches.

He wore a light-blue leisure suit and hush-puppy shoes, not exactly revolutionary garb, and we talked for fifty minutes over coffee ordered from room service. His manner of speaking was direct, clear, forceful, and engaging. There was little small talk and, likewise, no monologues. Around seventy, although with surprisingly few gray hairs, he must have told the stories of his life and his encounters with apartheid many times before, but he remained cheerful throughout the conversation, even when the subject was his own sufferings.

The education of Beyers Naude has an ending not dictated by the early curriculum. His father, Joshua Naude, served with distinction on the Afrikaner side in the Boer War. He was a chaplain and close adviser to many of the Boer generals and, afterwards, at the Vereeniging Peace Conference, voted with the minority to continue the war against Britain rather than submit to its terms. In the 1920s, while serving as a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, he became an early member of the Broederbond, the Afrikaner secret society that grew notorious for serving as an underground for the extreme Nationalists who after 1948 ran the government.

Beyers followed his father into the Dutch Reformed Church. Also, for twenty years, until 1963, he was a member of the Broederbond. The split came when he was unable to find justification for apartheid in the Bible. He resigned from the Broederbond and made public his reasons, an act which infuriated the membership. When he accepted the directorship of the Christian Institute, he was defrocked by the Dutch Reformed Church. Since then, however, he has continued to speak out against the white, minority government, but at great cost. In 1972, for example, after a sermon in Cape Town, the church where he had spoken burned to the ground. In 1977, by a peculiar South African practice, he was banned.

Ancient Greece had ostracism and modern Russia has retained the sentence of exile, but neither is a precise precedent for banning orders. In Naude's case, the minister of justice informed him by a hand-delivered letter that, henceforward, he would comply with the conditions or face charges whose penalty might be death. No trial or hearing preceded the banning; nor was explicit reason ever given for its issuance. Nevertheless, from that point, Naude wasn't allowed to address any public meetings. In fact, he could meet only with one person at a time, meaning his wife would have to leave the room when a friend dropped by to see him. He was restricted to an area around Johannesburg, although he pointed out that had he chosen he could have fled the country. The media were prohibited from quoting him in their dispatches.

In our conversation, he made the distinction between the current situation in South Africa and segregation as it existed in the American South. "There," he said, "you had recourse to the law and the courts. Here parliament runs everything and, as it chooses, can pass an act to stifle any change."

In South Africa's case, parliament has enacted a series of laws that, were they not the cornerstones of apartheid, might be thought to have been

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plagiarized from George Orwell's *1984*. Naude went through some of the stipulations: the Liquor Act prevents whites and blacks from drinking together; the Publications Act gives the government a free hand at censorship; the Reservation of Separate Amenities is the essence of petty apartheid; the Prohibition of Political Interference Act outlaws multiracial parties; the Group Areas Act keeps blacks from living in white neighborhoods; the Black Urban Areas Consolidation Act regulates the flow of labor into the cities.

Because so many peaceful avenues of change are barricaded, Naude fears that violence will precede any structural changes in South Africa. He abhors the prospect, and said so sincerely more than once, but doesn't see how it can be avoided when normal political dissent—as practiced throughout the Western world—can be classified as traitorous under the broad definitions of the Internal Security Act.

"I don't know when it will come or how," he said on leaving, referring to a general upheaval, "but when it does, first the blacks will suffer. Then it will be the whites."

Like many others, I first wanted to visit South Africa after reading the books of Alan Paton, who is best known for his novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Published in 1948, the book remains a current reference on the country's racial dilemma. But in reading that and other books, I found South Africa difficult to visualize. *Cry, the Beloved Country* begins: "There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it." But it was still hard to imagine them. I wanted to fix images to the words.

I also wanted to meet Alan Paton. From a book jacket I learned that he lived in Hillcrest, Natal, which on the rail line is between Kloof and Botha's Hill. Ixopo is not far away. I addressed a letter of introduction to "Alan Paton, Hillcrest, Natal, South Africa," and several weeks later a reply came from his wife, encouraging me to visit.

The Natalian hills above Durban are reminiscent of a plush London suburb: Parts of Surrey and Sussex came to mind. But the view from the hilltops isn't hedgerows but the sweep of the Indian Ocean. The Patons' house, down a quiet lane, might also be found in Larchmont or Oyster Bay—except for the gardens. Along the driveway, beside the house, and on the terraced back lawn were trees, shrubs, and flowers that made it clear that this was the tropical tip of Africa.

Although he has published ten books, many of them best sellers, it is not as a writer that Paton has spent his life. Born in 1903 in Pietermaritzburg, 45 minutes north of Hillcrest, he became a school teacher after being educated at the University of Natal and a teacher's college. For thirteen years he was the principal of a reformatory for black boys at Diepkloof outside Johannesburg, which is now part of Soweto. In 1953, he founded the Liberal party, the country's first multiracial party that attempted to wrest the parliamentary majority from the Afrikaner Nationalists. Only since the party was outlawed in 1968 has he had uninterrupted time to write.

His eyes are what you notice first. They have a searing quality, in the sense of Scottish righteousness, but also a twinkle of benevolence. His hair is white, and with age his shoulders have rounded. Sometimes he doesn't answer a question immediately, but instead stares off pensively, his hand cupped under his chin. Then he will turn square and face you, very much the school principal addressing a pupil.

We talked in his studio, whose double doors open to the view of the Indian Ocean. It is not surprising that he began his most recent novel, *Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful*, with a description of a related vista: "At night it can draw gasps of wonder, for you can see spread out below you the lights of the city of Durban. . . ." In the same book, which is partly autobiographical and in many respects my choice among his novels, he asks the question: "Can white hopes and black hopes be realized together, in this southern land to which both white and black have given their devotion?" Over tea, he offered some answers.

He began by saying that for as long as he could remember visitors have come to South Africa, seen the despair of places like Soweto or Crossroads near Cape Town, and predicted that "things can't last" more than a year or two. But in Paton's lifetime, which is also that of South Africa as a nation, apartheid has only grown more entrenched. He noted that the pass laws, which require blacks to carry identification at all times or face arrest and a fine, date to the last century. The land was segregated before 1948, but since then, especially with the development of the homelands, the demarcation has grown sharper.

Unlike many Americans who assume that time will begin to heal most political differences, he will not say that he is hopeful about the country's future. Instead he chooses the awkward construction that he is "not hopeless" that peaceful change will come. But to those who only see gloom in the world, he points out, somewhat elliptically, that "the miracle of my lifetime is what happened in Germany," by which he means the defeat of the Nazis and the coming of peace to the European continent. Clearly he struggles between the desire for change to come and the reality of the strength of the ruling party.

Like Beyers Naude, he is not without scars for his outspokenness. Because of the international fame that accompanied the authorship of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, he said he was probably spared being banned or imprisoned. For many years after he founded the Liberal party four security policemen followed him everywhere. *Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful* has this passage: " . . . And then the Security Police. You know my aunts and uncle are very respectable, and they didn't like the police attending my cousin's funeral. When I say they attended it I mean they parked a little way off, and got out of the car and leaned against it, watching. You know how they are taught to look at people with that merciless stare that frightens the wits out of the more timid ones." In conversation, he told a similar story from his own experience with the police.

Before the visit ended, he recounted a trip he made in 1954 on commission for *Collier's* magazine to write about the United States on the threshold of desegregation. That was the year of the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* decision by the Supreme Court. On the journey, which lasted several months, he saw white privates in the Army saluting black officers and other irreversible signs that never again would the United States embrace policies like those Paton deplored in his own country. On a trip to New Orleans in 1981, Paton saw again a man that he had interviewed on that earlier assignment. He remembered the man as an extreme racist and when they met at a dinner, Paton asked him how he had adjusted to integration.

"Oh, I still have my prejudices," the man said, "but thank God my children don't have them." Looking right at you, Paton recites these lines as an exemplary tale, so as to leave no doubt that he hopes the same dialogue might someday be repeated in South Africa.

It had been my hope to meet Bishop Desmond Tutu while in South Africa. Despite his accomplishments as the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, I knew little of his day-to-day work. A mutual friend agreed to arrange an introduction. But just as I left for South Africa, he arrived in New York for a semester's residence at Union Theological Seminary. While there, he learned that he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. Our meeting was thus lost in the commotion.

I never did get the opportunity to speak directly with Bishop Tutu. The Nobel Prize transformed him into a media darling and placed on his doorstep a standing corps of journalists. At various functions around New York, however, I was able to hear him speak. Each time was a pleasure.

Nobody will ever describe Desmond Tutu as Lincolnesque, even if his effect is to transform South African society as Lincoln did ours. Rather than being tall and brooding, he is short and ebullient, perhaps the most cheerful man ever to take on so somber a task. At 53, his gait remains spry—it reminds me of a sandpiper's—and even on the subject of apartheid there is a springtime melody in his speech. His favorite weapons are humor and an observant eye. He fondly recalls a sign he once saw in a homeland: "Drive carefully. Natives cross here," which he would amend to: "Drive carefully. Natives very cross here."

After hearing him speak on several occasions, I came to the conclusion that he won the Nobel Prize because of his ability to describe apartheid in the plain, sparse language that recalls some vivid chapters of the Bible. His work for peace is to try to convince his countrymen that unless peaceful change comes soon, general violence will.

South African blacks, in his words, are the "little people—the unsung heroes who have their noses rubbed in the dust every day." He has an Orwellian ear for the language of the system that believes in "foreign natives" and that passes laws to invent homelands. On the tests conducted to determine race, he explains: "They put a pin in you, and your expression is supposed to tell them which race you are. One child is classified as white and another 'of color' when both are of the same family. It is like Hitler's Aryan madness." But, then, in what I would describe as his stump sermon, his eyes will twinkle as he tells of an early encounter between whites and blacks: "We had the land and they had the Bible. When they said, 'Let us pray,' we closed our eyes. When we opened them again, they had the land and we had the Bible." He frequently ends by saying that "we will remember later those who helped us now," but his tone is never threatening, except to pretense.

When he says that apartheid is "an evil system, a system as evil as Communism," he makes a point that occurred to me frequently while traveling in South Africa: that is, its similarities to the Soviet Union and its political system. One reason that the Reagan Administration advocates its policy of "constructive engagement" is to bolster a government perceived to be a bulwark against Soviet penetration in southern

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Africa. Defense of strategic minerals and vulnerable passages off the Cape of Good Hope is another reason why Americans are often ambivalent toward taking a strong position against the South African government. But everything the Reagan Administration deplores in Soviet politics—the denial of the rights to think, travel, and work freely—I encountered over and over again in South Africa. The justifications for the homelands reminded me of the agitprop I heard repeatedly on a trip to the Soviet-occupied Baltic states. The wire around townships like Soweto looks like what you pass through on the way from Vienna to Prague. Tutu's genius has elements of Solzhenitsyn's.

It is easy to hear men like Naude, Paton, and Tutu and believe that there are solutions to the problems in South Africa that exclude violence, or at least might keep it to a minimum. But such hopes leave aside the historical interests and fears of the Afrikaners, whose decision it will be to make war or peace.

Before leaving South Africa, I visited Blood River, which is as indicative of the country, in one sense, as is Soweto. In the development of Afrikaner nationalism, no event was more pivotal, save perhaps the Great Trek, than the 1838 battle against Zulu tribesmen on the banks of a river that evokes a past like that at Antietam creek.

I drove the last fifteen miles to the Blood River battle site on dirt roads through a vast landscape whose hills were only a silhouette at dusk. I expected the battlefield to be the South African equivalent of Bull Run or Yorktown with the attending visitors' centers and concession stands. But only a small sign, difficult to read in the twilight, indicated the way to a small museum and the more striking, life-size replica of the laager that fought here on the night of December 16.

Led by Andries Pretorius, fewer than 1,000 Afrikaners killed 3,000 Zulus in about six hours of close-quarter combat. The victory secured the Afrikaners land for farming and settlement that was up-country from British rule. The anniversary of the battle is celebrated as a national holiday—the Day of the Covenant—that is much like our Thanksgiving, although the feted imagery isn't cooperation with local Indians but the rout of a black nation.

In his study of the Afrikaners, *The White Tribe of Africa*, David Harrison writes: "Blood River still matters, of course, because it offers the perfect symbol for the Afrikaner Nationalist view of South Africa today—a gallant, God-fearing country surrounded by the forces of evil. It is the theme of countless politicians' speeches every 16 December: 'South Africa is on the brink of another Blood River. . . .' "

I lingered at Blood River until after dark, when the only light came from the stars. Under such a sky it is easy to make the connection between the Afrikaners and those Americans who settled the West. Around eight o'clock headlights appeared on the dirt road leading to the battlefield's entrance. The car approached mine, and its front window was rolled down. I expected the driver to be a security guard and asked: "Do you speak English?" The answer, in gruff self-assurance, was: "Speak any damn language you please."

In the car, it turned out, was a middle-aged Afrikaner and his wife. They had driven out to camp on the banks of Blood River—in reenactment and homage to those who did the same 147 years ago, before the fateful encounter. Such an evening under the stars amounted to a reaffirmation of the faith. When the man's interior car light came on and lit up his face, I saw in profile a portrait whose determination matched those cast in bronze inside the museum. His streaked, gray hair looped around his ears, as you might find on a New England farmer unconcerned about his appearance, and there was sharpness to his stare that indicated he could withstand a great deal of suffering, should it be necessary. Looking at his calloused hands as they gripped the steering wheel, I couldn't help but think that when the fight starts in earnest, men such as this will defend the lines.

One leaves South Africa with a sense of relief. As the Pan American jet lifted into the night sky over Johannesburg, I was finally freed from the tension of a society divided along racial lines. Signs like those in Durban, "This bathing area is reserved for the sole use of the white race group," are a constant reminder of the ideology that would post such a notice. It is also easier, once airborne, not to be reminded of the similarities between South Africa's racial history and that of our own country.

At the first Lincoln-Douglas debate in 1858, Abraham Lincoln said: "I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races." Nevertheless, he continued: "I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." But it took one of the world's deadliest wars for Lincoln to have his way. □

Miriam London

BOLD WORDS FROM CHINA

When the Party's top theoretical organ advocates freedom of discussion, every writer feels uneasy and on guard.

Almost everyone, liberal and conservative, seems bullish on China these days. Mention the Soviet Union and a dark chain of free association begins: rigidity, orthodoxy, intransigency, menace, with unbroken links into the future. Say China and you elicit a string of sunny antonyms: flexibility, pragmatism, compromise, and doors opening upon vistas of promise and hope.

Is all this true about China? Are the Chinese Communists, perhaps, "going our way"? That something interesting is taking place inside China is undeniable. Contrary to the general impression abroad, however, there is no single, clear voice calling the signals of change. Instead, the more closely one listens, the more voices one hears, often using the same words to say quite different things. Nowhere is this more distinctly articulated than in China's literary world, of late a fairly open arena, where writers and journalists, many of them scarred survivors of long "leftist" persecution, and assorted Party leaders have been talking aloud, not so much with as at each other. The most important words to float out of this "discussion" and reach the West, where they are often taken at face value, are "emancipation of the mind" and "creative freedom." Following upon other ideologically irreverent-sounding phrases heard from China in recent days, these bold words seem to rattle the dry bones of Marxist dogma and threaten to blow them away. Do they indeed?

For a few of the top leaders of the "reform faction," who now more or less steer the course from Peking, notably strong man Deng Xiaoping and his protégé Hu Yaobang, the phrase "emancipation of the mind" has a specific meaning—to throw off the fanatic leftist views of the late Mao era, in this case, on literature and art. The slogan is directed mainly at Party cadres, most of them culturally illiterate, who are still infested with such views—that is, who regard writers and artists as a tainted caste, to be assigned tasks according to a prescribed formula, and to be kept on very short leash, it being the nature of this element to grow arrogant and rebellious. Under the reign of Maoist ultraleftism, an article of "literary criticism" in the official press was as chilling as an ex-

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ecution. Behind the lines of purely verbal severity, which sometimes, curiously, seemed to hold out hope of redemption, the reality was sickeningly violent: seizure, subjection to public "struggle," imprisonment or harsh exile, and, during the Cultural Revolution, torture and death at the hands of an adolescent mob. As no Chinese writer can forget, the Cultural Revolution itself began with an article criticizing a play written by the historian and then vice-mayor of Peking, Wu Han, who was consequently, as the official phrase now goes, "persecuted to death." It is this cruel record that one writer in the *People's Daily* clearly had in mind last December 8 when he said it had to be admitted with shame that one of the Chinese "characteristics" of socialism during most of its history was "an addiction to making others suffer." Indeed, he added, "during those years a whole batch of people were trained who could make their living only from political movements and making people suffer."

It is this addiction that the reformists in Peking, some of whom were themselves victims of Maoist barbarism, would like to eliminate from the Chinese cultural world. They must be credited, therefore, with a civilizing mission. True, they continue to act harshly on dictatorial caprice and have shown no consistency in braking leftism or maintaining moderation. Although foreign analysts like to ascribe such inconsistency of policy to Deng Xiaoping's need to appease or compromise with a more left-leaning faction of the power coalition, it is no less plausible to assume that Deng himself has been uncertain and impulsive in dealing with the unexpected consequences of any slackening of controls. He dealt ruthlessly with the amateur young writers who spoke out boldly across China during the brief heyday of Democracy Wall in 1978-79, silencing them with long prison terms. Alarmed also by "rightist," or "bourgeois liberal," trends in officially recognized "theoretical, literary, and art circles," he initiated a stifling increase in cultural controls during 1980-83, culminating in the notorious campaign against "cultural pollution," which threatened for a time to take off in cultural revolutionary fashion. The intense shock produced within China and the possibility, since hinted at, that foreign investors' confidence in Chinese stability might be shaken helped snap Peking back to its senses. Only in 1984, it is now openly said, "did the evil wind not blow."

Nevertheless, the wind of evil lately blowing is not as fierce or relentless as it was during the time of Mao. Nor is the purpose of the blast really the same as before. The reformists have a very different vision for China from that of the Maoist obscurantists, with their bizarrely retrograde worker-peasant-soldier society. The Dengist projection into the future is now clear to see. It is the creation at maximal speed of a modern, Communist superstate, the colossus of the Pacific. The emphasis is on attaining national power and prestige great enough for China to exact its own terms from the rest of the world. In order to achieve this awesome status, China cannot remain intellectually and culturally inferior, incapable of inspiring its own people or making an impression abroad. It needs an intelligentsia, not a sorry band of cowed scribes and dim semi-literates. The reformists have learned something about the effects of crushing repression on human creativity. In the words of a Chinese media correspondent: "It is not possible for a trembling hand to produce great works."

The reformists have learned something about the effects of crushing repression on human creativity.

Not only are creditable writers and artists needed to serve the new nationalism, but, it is hoped, they themselves may warm to its rays—a corollary effect of potential benefit to the Party at this time of unsettling change and ideological crisis. Pride in *Chinese* achievement, for which Communist party leadership would, of course, be taken as indispensable, could do much to shore up the crumbling ruins of Marxist faith. That the reformists do not miss these obvious possibilities can be seen from their constant, sentimental propaganda appeals for a united front to build up the "motherland." Indeed, is this anything new in the Communist world? Long ago, it was the "fatherland," even holy Russia, not the totalitarian state, that Stalin invoked for Soviet subjects to defend when Nazi Germany invaded during World War II.

Therefore, despite misgivings and dissension within its ranks, the Deng leadership again pressed down on the pedal of anti-leftism, barely in time to establish the dominance of this line at the fourth national congress of the Chinese Writers' Association, which began on last December 20. According to certain Hong Kong journals, which have a good track record for reliable "inside information," only swift maneuvering by Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang headed off an attempt by the more left-leaning top Party ideologist Hu Qiaomu and central propaganda head Deng Liqun to accomplish precisely the reverse, that is, to push anti-rightism as the line on literature and the arts. This cliff-hanger prelude to the congress and the last-minute rescue, attributed by the grapevine to Hu Yaobang, undoubtedly contributed to the extraordinary emotionalism of its proceedings. Neither Hu Qiaomu nor Deng Liqun attended. Congratulatory telegrams from the two officials, read to the assembled writers at the opening session, were received in total silence, without even a polite round of applause. On the other hand, a message of greeting from the sickbed of Zhou Yang—a famous littérateur with a checkered political past, who had, however, turned against the left and become a prominent target of the campaign against spiritual pollution—drew spontaneous, "thunderous" applause, lasting several minutes. This was, in the words of the Hong Kong journal *Cheng Ming* of February 1, nothing less than a "public opinion poll," with "zero marks" given the leftists and total approval accorded all those, represented by Zhou Yang, who recently suffered censure for exposing new forms of "alienation" under socialism and advocating a return to humanistic values.

The episode may be even more fascinating than it appears, for it is doubtful that the "opinion" expressed from the floor truly matched that of Hu Yaobang, who reportedly sat smiling rather cheerily from the platform at the prolonged applause. There is no neat and simple congruence here between political formula and popular aspiration. The Party may assign its own definitions to "rightism" and "leftism" as it attempts to justify its wavering course, but the terms have long escaped their propaganda categories into the world where real meaning is forged.

One of the prominent participants in the writers' congress, the journalist Liu Binyan, revealed such divergence of meaning with striking clarity in an article later published in February in a Hong Kong journal. "Some people," he wrote, "have always tried to oppose rightism, in other words, to reduce the freedom of literary creation." Liu Binyan thus automatically equates anti-rightism with loss of freedom—an equation that he has evidently long taken for granted. The common Party definition for rightism is, however, "bourgeois liberalism," about which Liu Binyan has the following to say: "I have pondered deeply over this term for five years, but so far I have not quite understood what it means. I am not sure whether it implies that we are enjoying too much proletarian freedom here and so it is unnecessary to import any from foreign countries, or that freedom will be contaminated by bourgeois characteristics once it goes beyond a certain limit, and so a limit has to be set." For Liu Binyan, all such ideological verbiage is stripped to ascertain one central meaning—freedom, its loss or gain.

The theme of freedom as understood by Liu Binyan also became, unexpectedly and overwhelmingly, central to the mood and proceedings at the writers' congress. The triggering event was a speech by Hu Qili, member of the Party Central Committee Secretariat and an apparent rising star in the reform faction. Although the speech made its mark instantly by taking a clear anti-leftist line, the key word that elicited a surge of euphoria was "freedom," especially when used exhilaratingly alone, without the usual tail of ideological qualifiers. "Creation must be free," he said. "Writers must be able to think with their own minds and must have ample freedom to choose material, themes, and artistic methods to express their own feelings, emotions, and thoughts. . . . [All of society] should act firmly to ensure that writers have such freedom." As *Cheng Ming* reported, "once 'freedom' was mentioned on the platform," the writers at the congress seemed themselves set free, departing from the "normal practice," the rigid format and "tongue-in-cheek talk," of previous congresses and, at last, making a false propaganda cliché come true, namely, by "freely airing their views."

That this rage for freedom is not an observer's chimera but, in fact, elsewhere breaks through the surface of China's intellectual and cultural world can be corroborated by reference to the Chinese media during 1984-85. For example, in the alleged interests of further "developing" Marxism, an article in the *People's Daily* last December 3 called for opening the door to foreign, non-Marxist cultural influences and for permitting theoretical and academic debate "based on different viewpoints." "One's own views and grounds," the author wrote, "should be the only basis for conducting discussions." If a theory cannot withstand debate, but gains its advantage from "some external force," then it is a

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"false advantage," which is bound to collapse. A radio commentator on January 7 hailed both the apparent victory for literary freedom and the democratic proceedings at the writers' congress and cited "public opinion" on behalf of the extension of such achievements "to the entire sphere of ideology, instead of being limited merely to the literary world." An article in the Peking *China Daily* of February 27 advocated "greater freedom" for social scientists to differ from "established thought" without fear of making "political" mistakes. As a similar essay in the *People's Daily* explained on March 1, scholars who are "on guard" and afraid never say or produce anything new. The ten-year period of the Cultural Revolution was barren of innovation because "potential intellectual resources were suppressed by the instruments of dictatorship." The essay stressed the importance of "academic democracy," meaning that "academic and theoretical right and wrong cannot be determined by administrative decree or by irrelevant and unfair 'mass criticism,' but [only] by academic discussion and practice." An article in the *People's Daily* of February 4, entitled "Silence is the Thing to be Feared," began with a question: "Should a political party or state encourage the free airing of views and allow people to speak out freely?" The author's answer, based on a review of history, was that "the suppression of public opinion [has always] led to disaster."

The appearance of such articles in major organs of the official media would not be possible without powerful, backstage support, evidently from individuals in the reformist faction. The articles do not challenge current state ideology or Party rule. Any of the writers or "commentators" would undoubtedly be prepared to say, as Liu Binyan indeed wrote, "I am not a dissident." Such people have apparently pinned on the reformists whatever realistic hope they have of tolerable cultural conditions. But the opinion they express, ingenuously or not, implies an open-endedness that runs counter to the sharp definition of limits found in other published statements, particularly from Party sources.

Thus, the Party head of Guangdong Province, in a January 29 message to a meeting of the provincial branch of the Chinese Writers' Association, "expressed the hope that writers would correctly exercise the freedom to create"—a line of delicious absurdity which, however, says perfectly what it means. In his message for a similar occasion on last December 31, the Party head of Heilongjiang Province spelled things out: The "criterion" for judging literature and art is whether or not they reject foreign pollutants and further modernization and building people's confidence in socialism. Once this criterion is met, he said, "we can go all out creating freely. . . . " An article in Peking's *Guangming Daily* last October 18 began by proclaiming the necessity of "revolutionizing thinking" on literature and art, in response to the "extensive and profound social revolution" currently taking place in China, and proceeded to explain what this meant: "Our literature and art should enthusiastically extol the socialist new people and praise the reformers." It also meant—and here the article aimed at its real target and betrayed its "anti-rightist" colors—putting an end to all those works exhibiting "moral fever," that is, exalting "abstract" morality and human virtues which allegedly have an "eternal" value transcending historic and social conditions. In short, there is no place in this "revolutionized thinking" for the distinguishing mark of the world's great literature—universality. So much for the yearnings of the 80-year-old novelist Ba Jin, expressed in a speech written for the writers' congress, to see a Chinese "Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Tolstoy."

The earlier noted speech of Hu Qili, which released, among other emotions, a torrent of relief and gratitude in its audience—causing one poor writer to gush afterward that "it was most soothing, like the morning dew"—nevertheless also proffered the same literary recipe from the cookbook of socialist realism, namely, the optimistic portrayal of the new Dengist man, the reformer dedicated to the four modernizations. At the same time, Hu echoed one of the reform faction's most enlightened themes, calling upon the Party cadres to place writers and artists "on an equal footing with" themselves in the matter of literary criticism: "We [the Party] must not do things in an oversimplified and crude manner, nor should criticism be exaggerated. We should not pin political labels on writers, but allow them to defend themselves." It is the irony of such laudable calls for a return to reason and civilized behavior that they reveal all the more plainly the present servitude of China's professional writers, who must still be "raised up" to the level of the cadre-bureaucrats, the theoretical "servants of the people." The Party attitude is both newly benign and patronizing. "Many of our Party personnel have established deep friendships with literary and art workers," Hu Qili declared in his speech, in strange parallel to the man of anecdote who maintained that some of his best friends were Jews. Patronization can go to considerable lengths. In the spirit of "close friendship" with "literary and art workers," the Party head of Heilongjiang helpfully suggested that "we [leaders] should regularly convey to [them] the guidelines of relevant documents and explain to them the political and economic situation, so that they can better understand. . . . "

It might be argued that many backward opinions uttered in the media represent subordinate or provincial perversions of central policy, and, indeed, this is often true. Liu Binyan could and did tick off precisely the names of provinces in which a "better" anti-leftist line has been pursued. But this is the reality of all practice in China, which is not only divided into individual kingdoms, but hidden kingdoms within kingdoms. Moreover, the constant vacillation and ambiguity of central policy favor latitude in local "interpretations," generally in the best self-interest of the lesser Party nobility, with whom China's professional writers ultimately have to deal. When the Party's top theoretical organ, *Red Flag*, advocates freedom of creation, discussion, and debate, "as long as they do not go against the law" (February 16), every functionary knows that he is safe to maneuver within the misty confines of this "law," and every writer feels uneasy and on guard.

The weight of unpromising evidence, listing on the Party side, indicates, then, that creative freedom in literature and the arts, like the freer activity in the Chinese economy today, will probably remain a "bird in a cage." The cage may turn out to be quite spacious, comfortable, and even dignified—attractive, in fact, to many of China's writers, who would likely see in it an improvement over their present material poverty and lack of status. Many of them would surely welcome decent income and housing, security, public recognition, and even state prizes. All this is not only possible, but seems familiar. Haven't we, in fact, seen it somewhere before? Obviously, we have—in the country of "mature socialism" that is China's neighbor, the Soviet Union. It is part of what the Soviet émigré writer, Vassily Aksyonov, recently described as literary "success, Soviet-style." As he also noted, Soviet ideologists have nothing against creative talent and, on the contrary, would welcome true literary quality, "with only one condition, its docility." The same could be said of Peking's most advanced ideologists of reform. "Unfortunately," Aksyonov added, "these two virtues—quality and docility—seldom go hand in hand."

The reformists in Peking have a distance to go, however, before fully appreciating this dilemma. They have still to establish that respectable, docile intelligentsia, in the first place, and to reach that Soviet level of literary product dismissed by Aksyonov as "mediocrity," let alone of the exceptional works of talent and universal appeal which have managed to survive Soviet censorship. For the bright cultural future toward which Peking is hurrying, bedeviled by leftist obstructionists and cheered on by the outside world, looks to be, on closer inspection, ever more like the tarnished Soviet present. Certainly not more than this, and perhaps much less. Deng Xiaoping may yet have time to make it, with luck. But is this what the Chinese intelligentsia really wants—or the world expects? □

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Harry V. Jaffa, with a reply by Melvin E. Bradford

BRADFORD AND JAFFA: ONCE MORE ON LINCOLN

Two eminent Lincoln scholars disagree on the legacy of Father Abraham.

My good friend, Professor Melvin E. Bradford, of the University of Dallas, has protested, not without reason, against the representation—and/or misrepresentation—of his views on Abraham Lincoln that appeared in many of the nation's major newspapers and journals about three years ago ("Against Lincoln: My Dissenting Views," *TAS*, December 1984). "For the past three years," he writes, "the mere rumor of my complaints against the continuing influence of Father Abraham's example on the nation's public life has seemed to have a life of its own, surviving and even growing in inverse proportion to the number of times when some deflation or correction of it has been attempted in my own work or in the writings of my friends."

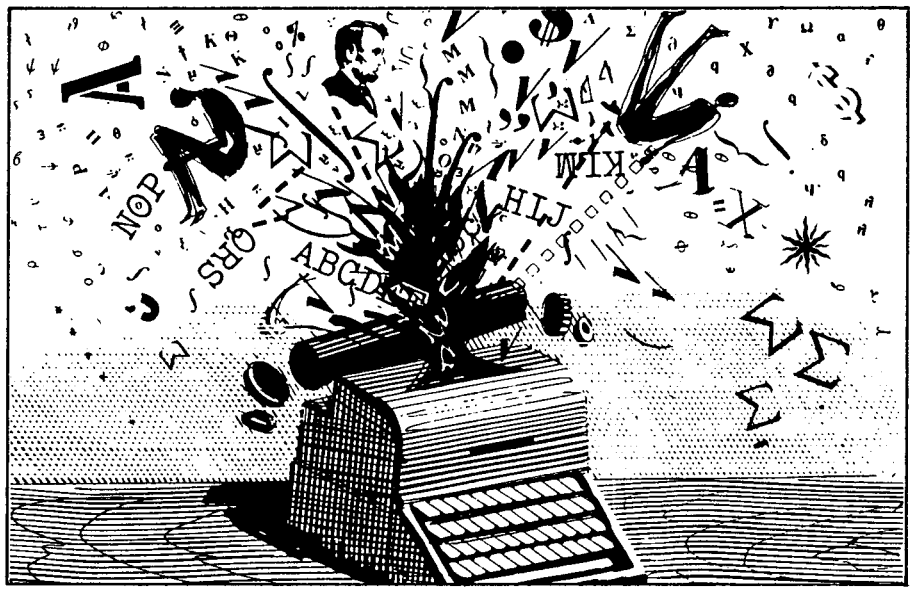
These complaints are not altogether without merit. They would have appeared even more plausible had Professor Bradford mentioned that the occasion for the attacks upon his anti-Lincoln writings was his nomination for the chairmanship of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Those attacks were motivated by nothing more profound than a struggle over patronage. Many of those behind the attacks—or, in some cases, in the forefront—had never before manifested the least interest in Lincoln, or in what was thought about him. But Bradford's writings on Lincoln—whether sound or unsound—became a club with which to beat the Bradford nomination, and they were so used, callously, cynically, and ruthlessly.

In the foreword to my recent book, *American Conservatism and the American Founding* (Carolina Academic Press, 1984), Bill Buckley has written that I have "constantly honored [Abraham Lincoln] in terms that might astonish Lincoln's warmest eulogists." One might say that the extravagance of my admiration of Lincoln has in some respects been the mirror image of Mel Bradford's non-admiration. It may seem strange, but it is certainly true, that we have been drawn together by the intensity of our concern with the reputation of Lincoln's life and career. That is something that we share with each other, but not with many others, and certainly not with the critics of Bradford's proposed nomination to NEH. George Will wrote a blistering column, attacking Bradford for his views on Lincoln. But Will was entirely silent when Bradford actually published the writings to which Will (years later) belatedly took offense. Nor has Will ever deigned to mention my rebuttals to Bradford's argument with Lincoln. For the book in which I had replied to Bradford (*How to Think About the American Revolution*, 1978), had chapters showing that, not only the late Willmoore Kendall, but both Irving Kristol and the late Martin Diamond had opinions about the Declaration of Independence that did not differ in principle from Bradford's. Will's indignation in behalf of Lincoln surfaced only when it appeared that Bradford might be appointed head of NEH.

The truth is that George Will's view of the American Founding differs from that of Abraham Lincoln about as much as it does from Bradford's. In his columns, and in *Statecraft as Soulcraft*, Will has identified the American Founding—not as Lincoln did at Gettysburg, with dedication to the proposition that all men are created equal—but with moral vulgarity, with a "conflagration of desire for instant gratification." In a chapter on Will ("The Madisonian Legacy: A Reconsideration of the Founders' Intent") in *American Conservatism* I concluded that in his praise of Lincoln, and his denigration of the doctrine of the Gettysburg Address, George Will's was a mind divided against itself. In another chapter of *American Conservatism* ("The Doughface Dilemma: Or, the Invisible Slave in the American Enterprise Institute's Bicentennial"), I further documented the influence, not of Abraham Lincoln, but of John C. Calhoun, in the understanding of the relationship of the Declaration of Independence to the Constitution predominant in neoconservative circles.

There was some surprise, however—given our well-known differences on Lincoln and the Civil War—when in 1981 I wrote to the White House to support Bradford's candidacy for the NEH post. But Lincoln himself had said, "Stand with anybody who stands RIGHT. Stand with him while he is right and PART with him when he goes wrong." Bradford was—and is—wrong on the issues of 1860. But he seemed to me to be eminently sound on the issues that united conservative Republicans in 1980. He is as much against socialism at home, and Communism abroad, as the Republicans of 1860 were united against the extension of slavery. The great civil rights issue of today is resistance to race- or sex-based quotas in what is euphemistically called "affirmative action." Above all, on the "social issues"—especially those concerning the moral integrity of the family—I had reason to believe Bradford and I were in agreement. On these issues more than any others, I, at least, think the future of the Republic depends.

The contest for the NEH nomination turned into a tug-of-war between former liberal Democrats now neoconservative Republicans, and former conservative Democrats now New Right Republicans. The former attacked the latter for their opposition—a generation earlier—to civil rights legislation. But these attacks sometimes came with an ill grace from those with radical—and even Communist—pasts. To a great extent, this was a sectional struggle between northeastern and Southern and western Republicans, continuing within the Republican party one that had gone on for generations within the Democratic party. Lincoln would have observed wryly that the cause of virtue cannot do without repentant sinners (see his Temperance speech), and have welcomed both groups into the Republican party. And he would have celebrated their reception with fair shares of patronage. I thought then, and think now, that the Bradford nomination would have been a good one, both in



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terms of Bradford's personal qualities, and of the need to build the new Republican majority out of the dissolving fragments of the old Democratic coalition. In saying all this, I mean no adverse reflection upon William Bennett, who was chairman of NEH for three years and earned the respect and good will of everyone. When I wrote in Bradford's favor, I made it very clear that I did so in the spirit of Lincoln's political prudence and political magnanimity, and not because there was any abatement of our enduring differences. And I acknowledge with appreciation the strong support that Bennett himself has shown (as distinct from the anti-Bradford partisans) for my writings on Lincoln and the relationship of the Declaration of Independence to the Constitution.

Bradford's characterization of his view of Lincoln as "dissenting" is only a half truth. The popular reputation of Lincoln is indeed that of the Lincoln memorial—of the semi-divine hero who saved the Union for the people. But the reputation one finds in the academic literature is entirely different. This is the literature, moreover, which controls the writing of the textbooks, both for high school and college, upon which public opinion in the long run is based. Lincoln is reputed there as a successful war leader, but as little else. My *Crisis of the House Divided* (1959) is to the best of my knowledge the first scholarly work ever to take a favorable view of the House Divided speech, and therefore of the entire policy Lincoln pursued from 1854 on as a free soil, anti-slavery leader. In 1962, I was joined in this favorable assessment by Don Fehrenbacher, in *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850s.* While today we have many followers—since we both have had many students in the intervening years—it is still true that we are far from representing the mainstream of American scholarship and opinion.

To understand what that mainstream is—and why Bradford but not Jaffa is in it—one must turn to the question of the status of the Declaration of Independence, not as a document of political history, but as a document of political philosophy. Lincoln once said that he had "never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence." For Lincoln, the Declaration embodied an objective moral teaching that was the ground of the political teaching of the American Revolution—of the American Founding. It embodied, as he once wrote, "an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times." It was a teaching at once of moral and political principle, and of political prudence. The attitude of nearly every historian who has written on Lincoln—certainly of every mainstream historian—was expressed by Carl Becker, in the most (deservedly) famous work on its subject, *The Declaration of Independence,* published first in 1922. "To ask whether the natural rights philosophy of the Declaration of Independence is true or false," wrote Becker, "is essentially a meaningless question." What for Lincoln was the most meaningful of all questions—a question which he himself answered with a ringing affirmative—Becker calls meaningless. For Becker, as for Bradford, the very idea of "an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times," is a delusion. Such a truth was the core of Lincoln's being: Its rejection is the ground of that philosophical relativism that is the mainstream of American scholarship and opinion. Most historians who have written on Lincoln—bred in the same philosophical relativism as Becker—have treated Lincoln's moral earnestness with scorn, contempt, or sheer unbelief. And it is precisely in his attitude toward the Declaration that Bradford is at one with the mainstream, and at odds with Lincoln and with traditional moral philosophy and moral theology. For Bradford thinks Lincoln was a fanatic for insisting that, as a matter of natural law and natural right, slavery was wrong, and that the moral judgment of the wrongness of slavery had to be at the foundation of all policy dealing with it.

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Professor Bradford, throughout his article, represents himself as a student of Lincoln's rhetoric. Rhetoric is speech, however, and Lincoln's speech was political speech. Yet Bradford has never, to my knowledge, addressed himself to the actual political question to which Lincoln was compelled by events to address himself in his speeches: the question of slavery in the territories. One would never know, from Bradford's writings, that the direct and immediate cause of secession and of civil war was the radical and completely unprecedented Southern demand for a slave code for all federal territories. This was a demand to be constitutionally free to plant slavery on every foot of land owned by the United States outside the boundaries of the existing free states. Counting the existing slave states, this meant dedicating to slavery two-thirds or more of the continental United States. This demand also implied a constitutional right to extend slavery upon the ground of any future territory—within or without the continent—that might be acquired by the United States: for example Cuba, whose annexation was already being demanded, not to mention other Caribbean islands, and whatever of Mexico that had not already been seized and that might look good for the plucking.

By 1860, the South had concluded that it would not remain in the Union unless this demand was met. The federal government must extend police protection to every slaveholder who carried slaves into a United States territory. It was this issue that led the Southern Democrats to secede from the Charleston Convention in May 1860. It was this issue that led seven states to secede from the Union after Lincoln's election, and before his inauguration. When the Democratic party split, it did so because the South had rejected the candidacy of Senator Stephen A. Douglas—unquestionably the national party's dominant political figure. As a free state politician, Douglas could go no further than a willingness to guarantee that slaveholders be able to go into the territories. But he insisted that when there they must persuade their territorial fellow-citizens to vote them police protection for their slave property. *Federal* as distinct from *territorial* protection for slave property would mean that slavery followed the flag, and that no antislavery sentiment by freesoilers migrating into new territories could prevent slavery from being planted there. At bottom, the political cause of the Civil War was very simple. As Lincoln wrote to his old friend and former Whig colleague in the House, Alexander Stephens (soon to become Vice President of the Confederacy), on December 22, 1860, "You think slavery is *right*, and ought to be extended; while we think it is *wrong*, and ought to be restricted. That I suppose is the rub. It certainly is the only substantial difference between us." No account of the causes of the Civil War has ever transcended this explanation, either in simplicity or profundity. But you may search the writings of Bradford in vain to find any recognition of it.

Lincoln's House Divided speech was neither gnostic (whatever that means) nor mystic nor millenialist. It was an eloquent and courageous recognition of the political crisis for what it actually was. Chief Justice Taney, in *Dred Scott* (1857), had declared that the only constitutional power that Congress possessed over slavery in the territories was "the power, coupled with the duty of guarding and protecting the [slave]owner in his rights." The South, armed with this revolutionary interpretation of the Constitution, seized upon it as an instrument that would secure the future of slavery, once and for all, either within or without the Union. Lincoln argued—what I believe to be indisputably true—that there was no consistent ground upon which to resist the Southern demand, unless it was that condemnation of all human slavery that followed from the principles of the Declaration of Independence. It was Taney's denial of the meaning of the Declaration that governed his understanding of the Constitution, and it was his affirmation of that meaning that governed Lincoln's. And the difference between Lincoln and Taney on the meaning of the Declaration and the Constitution remains the central issue between Bradford and Jaffa.

In his Peoria speech of 1854, Lincoln laid the foundation of his entire argument thus. "Equal justice to the South, it is said, requires us to consent to the extending of slavery to new countries. That is to say, inasmuch as you do not object to my taking my hog to Nebraska, therefore I must not object to you taking your slave. Now, I admit, this is perfectly logical, if there is no difference between hogs and Negroes." Taney's opinion—the South's opinion—was to deny any moral ground for any constitutional distinction between a Negro and a hog.

The South seceded—and the Civil War came—because the South would not remain in a Union in which the perpetuation of slavery was not assured. And no assurance was acceptable except one that promised an almost indefinite expansion of slavery. This promise was justified in the minds of the political majority of the Confederate South by a conviction that slavery was a "positive good." The South's faith in the justice of its cause, its conviction of the superiority of the new Confederacy to the old Union, was

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given classic and definitive expression in Alexander Stephens's famous "cornerstone" speech in Savannah, Georgia, March 21, 1861. The old Union, said Stephens, rested upon ideas that "were fundamentally wrong. They rested upon the assumption of the equality of races. This was an error. . . . Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man. That slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical and moral truth." Stephens then goes on to compare the *scientific* discovery of the Negroes' inferiority to the scientific discoveries of Galileo and Adam Smith and Harvey—in particular to Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood. In short, the idea of *scientific* racism presided over the birth of the Confederate South no less surely than it did over Hitler's Third Reich, however different in character the personnel of the two ensembles may seem. After the Civil War was over, Stephens wrote his two-volume *A Constitutional View of the War Between the States.* In it he argued that the cause of the Confederacy was not slavery, but states' rights, which he identified with the defense of the minority from the tyranny of the majority. Confederate apologists ever since have followed his lead, and Bradford is no exception. The states' rights question is, however, derivative. The fundamental issue was always race and slavery. Stephens told the truth in the pristine days of Confederate optimism—before Fort Sumter—and not in the wake of Appomattox.

I pointed to Stephens's cornerstone speech in a reply to Bradford ("Equality, Justice, and the American Revolution") first published in *Modern Age* in 1977, and reprinted in *How to Think About the American Revolution.* Bradford knew that Stephens's speech destroyed his entire case against Lincoln, as well as destroying his case for the traditionalism (and innocence) of the Southern movement for independence. He knew that his only way of rebutting the evidence of that speech was to impugn its authority as representative of Southern opinion. He promised then to prove the nonrepresentativeness of Stephens's speech, and I have waited more than seven years for that proof. Now in the article in *The American Spectator* we seem to have all the evidence that Bradford could find. But Bradford, whose knowledge of the literature of the old South is encyclopedic, has been unable to discover so much as a word to contradict a word of Stephens's cornerstone speech. All Bradford can say is comprised in the lame assertion "that most Southerners recognized slaves as human beings in that they hoped to see them accept Christianity." This, and this alone, is his rebuttal of Stephens, which, however, he calls his "answer to Harry Jaffa"!

Perhaps most Southerners did hope to see Negroes accept Christianity. But why? The record is mixed. Certainly they did not want them to read the Gospels, since there were strict laws against teaching slaves to read in most states of the antebellum South. And let us never forget that the demand for the extension of slavery was founded from beginning to end, in Lincoln's language, upon the denial of any legal or moral ground for distinguishing between a Negro and a hog. Of course, the South was never *consistent* in denying the humanity of the Negro—as Lincoln himself took great pains to point out in the Peoria speech. But the antebellum South had no more difficulty in reconciling a "scientific" doctrine of racial inequality with Christianity than did the Ku Klux Klan in the post-Reconstruction South. Indeed, Stephens himself, toward the end of the cornerstone speech, explained the inferiority of the Negro *both* on the ground of nature *and* on the biblical ground of "the curse against Canaan."

Let us not be mealy-mouthed either about what Southern antebellum Christianity was like. The churches there were pressed into the defense of slavery as surely and as completely as the Communist party of the Soviet Union is pressed into the service of the Soviet state. If the slaves were told that Jesus loved them, and would take them to Heaven, they were also told that he would do so only if they were "good niggers" (like Uncle Tom), but that "uppity niggers" went to the other place. Some slaveowners may, in some abstract sense, have admitted Negroes to membership in the mystical body of Christ, but it played very little part in their ordinary consciousness. The latter is far better represented by Mark Twain in the following passage from *Huckleberry Finn.* Huck (mistaken for Tom Sawyer) is explaining to Aunt Sally why the steamboat supposedly bringing him from Missouri to Arkansas was delayed.

> "It warn't the grounding—that didn't keep us back but a little. We blowed out a cylinder-head."
>
> "Good gracious! Anybody hurt?"
>
> "No'm. Killed a nigger."
>
> "Well, it's lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt."

It is in Taney's opinion in *Dred Scott,* however, that one finds the most authoritative expression of the proposition that "niggers ain't people." In the South, this opinion came to be regarded not merely as canonical, but as Gospel truth. Under the Constitution, said Taney, Negroes were to be regarded

> as beings of an inferior order . . . and so far inferior that they had *no rights which the white man was bound to respect.* [Emphasis added.]

One wonders why Bradford's Christianity had not informed the Chief Justice to the contrary! The Negro, Taney continued,

> was bought and sold and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic whenever a profit could be made by it.

The black race, he said,

> were never thought of or spoken of except as property and when the claims of the owner or the profit of the trader were supposed to need protection.

This was the interpretation of the Constitution that the leadership of Abraham Lincoln was dedicated to denying.

Bradford's case against Lincoln loses every shred of plausibility the moment one recognizes the reality of the threat of the extension and perpetuation of slavery, and realizes what this would have meant to the future of free government. But Bradford also attempts to impugn Lincoln's character, in particular by attributing hypocrisy to Lincoln on the entire subject of the Negro and slavery. We confine ourselves to one specimen, which is typical. The "evidence is clear," writes Bradford, "that Lincoln was engaged in moralistic posturing when he spoke of his 'hatred' for the 'peculiar institution.' Otherwise we have a lot of trouble explaining his action in the 1847 Matson case, in which he attempted to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law and recover runaways."

But what are the facts? First, one must know—and surely Bradford does know—that Lincoln from beginning to end supported the enforcement of a Fugitive Slave Act, whether that of 1793 or the much harsher law of 1850. Lincoln pointed to the fugitive slave clause of the Constitution—Article IV, Section 2—which declares that runaways "shall be delivered up" to their owners. This was as much a part of the Constitution as any other, Lincoln said. Everyone who took an oath to support the Constitution, he believed, took an oath to the whole Constitution. No one had the right to declare that he would support the other provisions of the Constitution, but not this one. Paradoxical as it may seem, Lincoln argued, we owed it to the cause of freedom itself to perform this unwelcome duty. Only by so doing could we preserve the Union, and all the promise that it held, in the long run, even for the descendants of the slaves. One may disagree with Lincoln's position on the constitutional duty to return fugitive slaves, but there is in it nothing whatever to justify a charge either of hypocrisy or inconsistency.

It is of some interest nevertheless to know how Lincoln discharged his duty as an attorney in the Matson case, which Bradford has brought up against him. Matson was a Kentucky slaveowner with extensive property in Illinois. He regularly brought slaves to work on his Illinois farm. The whole story is told in detail in Beveridge's *Lincoln* (vol. 1, pp. 392 ff). In 1847 a group of Matson's slaves ran away, and claimed freedom under Illinois law. When the case came to trial, and Lincoln spoke to the jury, he told them that there was one and only one point upon which their verdict ought to be rendered.

> Were these Negroes passing over and crossing the State and thus, as the law contemplates, *in transitu,* or were they actually located indefinitely by the consent of their master? If only crossing the State, that act did not free them; but if located even indefinitely . . . their emancipation logically followed.

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The slaves were freed. Everyone knew that Matson had been using them as laborers on his Illinois farm. Lincoln only asked the jury to consider his client's claim in the clear light of the law, and of the true facts of the case. There were a thousand ways Lincoln could have appealed to the prejudices of the jury in the interest of his client. But Lincoln used none of them. Matson stalked angrily out of the courtroom, and never paid Lincoln his fee—which Lincoln never tried to recover. While there is no justification for saying that Lincoln had "thrown" the case, it is also true that nothing anyone could have done could more surely have brought freedom to the slaves. The same chapter of Beveridge that carries the Matson story also relates how "Lincoln, nearly ten years earlier, had secured the liberty of a [black] girl who had been illegally sold as a slave." On that—as on the real truth of the Matson case—Bradford is entirely silent.

Lincoln's record on the question of slavery and race must of course be examined and judged within the confines of the society and the political circumstances within which he lived and acted. The questions he faced were and remain perhaps the most complex and difficult ever to confront—if not to confound—human wisdom and virtue. Whenever this record is so examined, I believe it will be said that Lincoln's life story remains unsurpassed in human annals for magnanimity, for wisdom, and for justice. Would that the "influence of Father Abraham's example on the nation's public life" were what Bradford fears it to be. □

Melvin E. Bradford replies:

Concerning our general agreement on the great political questions of our era, Professor Jaffa is quite correct. I will not comment on the opening section, the exordium, of his remarks, except to say that I am pleased to see this fragment of the intellectual history of the American Right preserved on the record. In particular, Jaffa and I are united by our hostility to the modern version of egalitarianism that undermines the liberty of the citizen while simultaneously proclaiming its everlasting devotion to the rights of man. We agree also on most matters educational and on the role of liberal learning in the nurture of responsible men and women. Our most serious differences of opinion and interpretation have to do with what might be the best basis for preserving our national character and framing an argument against the levelers who threaten the stability of the regime: an argument concerning the grounds for a durable and distinctively American politics. On how to read the American Revolution and the train of events which resulted in the drafting and adoption of the Constitution of the United States we differ; and therefore we disagree about Abraham Lincoln—or for those reasons primarily, and a few others added along the way.

My good friend and faithful adversary is also correct in pointing out that our dispute has been conducted in public over a period of many years, that we are in some measure defined by it. But the quarrel in which we are engaged is even older than he suggests—was in fact an old one long before we were born. Thomas J. Pressly describes its origins in his *Americans Interpret Their Civil War* (1954). And even Pressly does not reach back far enough to find its beginnings; for they antedate the War Between the States and have implications which go well beyond the question of Negro slavery and its influence on our common history—so far as to consider the essential purposes, the ends, of our government, and the reasons why it is as strong (and as limited) as we have made it to be.

I will not reopen my conversation with Professor Jaffa concerning the Declaration of Independence except to say that there are ways of construing that document which are unrelated to both the reductionist gloss of Carl Becker and the philosophical paraphrase of Jaffa's Straussian dogmatics. I have indicated what one such reading might be in my *A Better Guide Than Reason: Studies in the American Revolution* (Sherwood Sugden, 1979). There I praise the Declaration *as I construe it—but not as Jaffa makes it out.* I have further specified in the title essay of my *Remembering Who We Are: Observations of a Southern Conservative* (University of Georgia Press, 1985) that there is a right principle, a "political ethic," for application to questions of policy. Its origins are in a respectful probity toward the political reality, the "way" or habitus, rooted in a particular history, with a priority assigned to "circumstance and prescription" as preserved and protected by "the broadest authorities of reason and revelation." One who believes in revealed truth is not a relativist. I have even conceded that men may posit their "right" to "an inherited politics generated by an inherited social and political order." I have no difficulty with a premise concerning self-preservation; and I have no doubt that the natural law exists, though known fully only to God. With the assistance of philosophy we perceive its outlines *from a very great distance*, but in such generality as to discourage immediate translation into *a priori* determinations about the absolute merits or demerits of a specific measure. As to the historic position of moral theology on the subjects of slavery and equality of rights, I suggest that the voice of the tradition was, in 1854, more complicated than Jaffa seems to think. My friend and I do not share the same epistemology. So be it. But it is reasonable that I should ask him to cease from attributing to me a simplistic caricature of my opinions.

There are two questions raised by Jaffa's reponse to my "Speech at Gettysburg": (1) Was the political rectitude of Father Abraham as Jaffa represents it to be—as Lincoln himself claimed? And (2) can Lincoln's conduct be defended from serious criticism once (or if) the argument from character in his behalf is sustained? I say no on both counts. The Lincoln who, in 1861, supported a constitutional amendment which would have prevented, *forever*, any change in federal policy toward slavery where it was established—who did this in his First Inaugural Address, even though the measure then before the country in the form of a change in our fundamental law would have precluded *any* subsequent amendment to release those in bondage, cannot be reconciled to the orator who, in 1858, asked for support in making the country (with respect to slavery) "*all* one thing, or *all* another." Or to the Lincoln who "never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence." Jaffa tells us of how Lincoln described himself, about the persona he assumed in 1854 and sustained until he replaced it with the wartime mask of "man of sorrows." What interests me is Lincoln as he was, in all his protean multiplicity, not in Lincoln as he pretended to be. Which brings me to respond to Jaffa's complaint against my use of the 1847 Matson case in Coles County, Illinois, where Lincoln represented a slaveowner in an effort to recover runaways.

Jaffa derives his account of the Matson affair from Senator Albert J. Beveridge's monumental *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858* (1928). Quoting Beveridge, Jaffa imagines that he has discredited my construction of this episode, and thus my view of Lincoln as a man, with an *argumentum ad verecundiam* (from authority). There is much sound matter in Beveridge's fine old biography. Though I am surprised to see it quoted by Professor Jaffa (who cannot be comfortable with much of its content), in my own view it is an honest piece of work, still useful to Lincoln scholars, but not in certain respects—not on the subject of Lincoln's practice of the law and not on the Matson case. Says John J. Duff in his *A. Lincoln: Prairie Lawyer* (1960), "The distinguished writer [Beveridge] is on untenable ground when he indicates that Lincoln, having no heart for the affair, was something less than energetic in his efforts in behalf of Matson" (p. 138). As Duff demonstrates, Beveridge misunderstood the nature of Lincoln's pleading from Illinois law: an argument that the runaways were "seasonal workers [who] . . . never at any time acquired the status of permanent residents." Duff quotes an 1885 article by Orlando B. Ficklin, "one of the attorneys who opposed Lincoln in the litigation," in which it is reported that the Emancipator presented a powerful case, one that should have recovered Matson's property, "with trenchant blows and cold logic and subtle knitting." The theory that Lincoln did not want these Negroes returned to slavery Duff calls "pure hogwash."

In addition to Duff there are other authorities on Lincoln as lawyer that support his description of Beveridge's handling of that subject as "haphazard," "uneven," and improperly dependent on Jesse W. Weik, one of the great idolators. But I repeat only one detail from this mass of commentary, the report of Mrs. Hiram Rutherford that "Lincoln arrived at the trial with chains to be used to take the slaves back into captivity" as it appears in the Hendrick and Hendrick edition of Dr. Hiram Rutherford's papers (*On the Illinois Frontier: Dr. Hiram Rutherford, 1840-1848*, 1981, pp. 139 ff). How this information reconciles with the conclusion that "nothing anyone could have done could more surely have brought freedom to the slaves," I cannot say. Nor how it proves Lincoln's devotion to the doctrine of human equality as "an abstract truth applicable to all men at all times." I will add, however, in reference to what Professor Jaffa is so kind as to remark regarding my command of the literature, that I read not only Southern texts but pay attention also to the history of the Old Northwest; and that, though it was a good thing that Lincoln lost this case, no one in Coles County doubted that he had deserved his fee.

From a close study of the Matson case and from careful scrutiny of other features of Lincoln's life before he became a national figure, we learn that "it is essential to dismiss a myth which has become part of the concentrated folklore of the near-deification of Lincoln"; that "to attempt to depict Lincoln as one possessed of a lifelong

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abhorrence of involuntary servitude is to falsify the record" (Duff, pp. 137 and 146). Moreover, there is evidence to the same effect scattered throughout Lincoln's career, none of it suggestive of what Jaffa means by "traditional moral philosophy": Lincoln's repeated insistence that the territories be reserved for settlement by "free white people"; his complaint that slavery was to be much criticized for mingling or "amalgamating" the races; and his advice to an antislavery friend, Congressman Elihu B. Washburne of Illinois, that it was not wise for Republicans to complain of a "white only" clause in a constitution proposed for Oregon. But I do not mean to suggest that there is, *for his time*, anything unusual about Lincoln's departures from the official norms *of our day* in his attitudes on the Negro, on race, and on human equality. Most of the American statesmen of the last century or earlier fall short of the standards of tolerance we now expect of public persons. Far short! And I would not anachronize in order to invent a usable past. However, I would ask the same of Professor Jaffa in his treatment of Alexander Stephens, to whose speech of March 21, 1861, he attaches so much importance.

Jaffa begins his gloss on Stephens's "cornerstone" speech with comment on the evidence of "*scientific* racism" in its text. He is quite right about this component, though it is not all of Stephens's argument in behalf of "the peculiar institution." Stephens reasoned in this fashion throughout his career, both before and after his big speech in Savannah, as did many other nineteenth-century Americans, most of them solid antislavery men who recited the Declaration of Independence, morning and evening, and insisted on the Union, whatever it might cost. Scientific racism is a European phenomenon; its forefathers are Darwinists such as Thomas H. Huxley. But it had its *fons et origo* on these shores in the great universities of the Northeast, where it prevailed for more than a century as the most respectable opinion. We connect it rightly with such men as Charles Loring Brace, Charles Pickering, Amory Lowell, Samuel George Morton, John W. De Forest, Louis Agassiz, and the Boston gentlemen who were members of the American Ethnological Society. Its currency depended not on cotton but on apostasy and speculation, uncommon vices below the Old Surveyors' line.

Southerners, on the other hand, were notoriously *unscientific* about everything and were inclined, when they defended slavery, to argue from history, law, and Holy Scripture. As an illustration of Southern feelings, I suggest Robert Manson Myers's edition of the papers of the Charles C. Jones family of Liberty County, Georgia, *The Children of Pride* (1972), or William Sumner Jenkins's *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (1935). Southerners listened with interest to theories of separate origin and sometimes quoted from "racial science," but when pressed usually retreated to a case at law. Indeed, the Southern churches (about which I am admonished to speak plainly) led resistance to distribution of the doctrine that the Negro was not of the same species as the white man. On the anomaly of the appearance of Stephens's argument in a Southern context, I recommend William Stanton's *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America, 1815-59* (1960). As for the attitude toward blacks suggested by the quotation from *Huckleberry Finn*, Harry Jaffa surely knows that it was, in 1860, if anything, more likely in New York, Ohio, or Illinois than in the South—for economic reasons, when not for others.

Jaffa has made much of my long silence on the sins of Alexander H. Stephens. The case as he presents it is that my "failure" to reply to his invidious equation of the Old South with Stephens on "natural superiority" demonstrates that the equation is justified. Such a proceeding is what the ancient rhetoricians called the *argumentum ad ignorantum*, the fallacy of reasoning from the absence of proof. That Jaffa has not written the sequel to *Crisis of the House Divided* which he promised twenty-six years ago *does not prove* (as we might reason if we followed his example) that Lincoln as President of the United States is not, for his forceful champion, the statesman promised in the language of his campaigning from 1854-1860. Just as my silence, thus far, on Lincoln and the territories does not signify that I am embarrassed by the subject. In fact, I have an essay on the rhetoric of the Peoria speech forthcoming in *Continuity* and have almost finished a discussion of Lincoln's speech on *Dred Scott*. Sometimes, most of us are slow in our work; and sometimes we wait upon occasion, for the right time to speak and the right context.

The truth about the reaction of the government of Jefferson Davis and of the other leaders of the Confederacy to Stephens's cornerstone speech is that the speech was the great exception to the norm in all the vast torrent of rhetoric shaped to the end of justifying their secession. Though they did not attack their Vice President, their dismay at his performance was common knowledge at the time. President Davis thought the speech "unfortunate," "foolish and inopportune," playing into the hands of the radical press of the North, which he, acting carefully, had not done in the official statement of the Southern position, his inaugural of February 18, 1861. Davis's caution was noted by the London *Times* and England's *Quarterly Review* (see Hudson Strode, *Jefferson Davis: Confederate President*). Making much of Stephens's speech is, according to Pressly's aforementioned *Americans Interpret Their Civil War*, a shopworn technique with Northern sectional apologetics. Assuredly, from the viewpoint of strategy, Stephens "spoke out of turn," opening with his effort at becoming "proclaimer of the Southern purpose" a "feud" with his superior which cost the South much during its "war for independence." Yet as the distinguished Southern historian Frank E. Vandiver has observed, "every other Confederate" speech of this period says nothing about scientific racism or the central importance of slavery to limited government and constitutional morality (*Their Tattered Flags: The Epic of the Confederacy*, 1970). Harry Jaffa may dispute the summary of these events contained in the work of Professor Vandiver. I leave that unpromising struggle to him. But the obvious fact remains—that it would have been the veriest folly for the leaders of the Confederacy to have offended the almost 80 percent of Southerners who were determined to resist Lincoln's tyranny, though they owned no slaves nor expected slavery to play a role in their lives, by telling them that they were obliged to die that other men might keep their Negroes; or by insisting to them that slavery was a "natural institution," given the drift of the latest ethnological evidence. What Jefferson Davis spoke of was "preserving the Government of our fathers in its spirit" and of paying whatever price "honor" and love of "liberty" would require. For such words as his, for the inheritance he called to mind, they would indeed put up a fight.

Which brings me to answer the second question raised by Professor Jaffa's remarks, to reopen the old quarrel between the sections antecedent to what we have said in our exchanges, and to offer an inclusive interpretation of the War Between the States and its continuing role as touchstone in the reading of American history. As is no other moment in our national experience, the "Second American Revolution" is a prism through which we shade our vision of American politics toward the harsh colors of ideology and hatred. In their view of their "good" or "evil," their passion for the argument from definition, many Americans even now announce their disposition to reduce the great questions of policy to little moral melodramas (like the one suggested by Lincoln in his letter to Stephens of December 22, 1860), self-satisfying Puritan morality plays; and in the name of the "higher law" of their private conscience in some good cause (peace, universal justice, brotherhood)

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threaten over and over again to make ours a government of men, not laws. Or no government at all—apart from the *ad baculum* arguments of what the satirist Samuel Butler called "the holy text of pike and gun." The trouble with this procedure is, of course, that our political identity as a people does not rest directly on distinctive personal versions of moral necessity, but rather on a constitutional rectitude based on pledged word, a method of dealing with some disputes while ignoring others. That identity, which Lincoln ignored or violated at will, is the only kind we can have without a cataclysmic transformation from within. This much Lincoln acknowledged—when it seemed expedient to do so.

Thus, if Lincoln were indeed all the man my friend says he was, even then his political conduct after 1854 would have been a disaster for the American people: in his distortion of the early history of the Republic; in his creation of a successful sectional party; in his condemnation of his adversaries as not only wrong, but evil; and in the victory he achieved on that basis. To this day we feel his example among us whenever some righteous soul in the name of God calls for political change in the process of offering his own refinement of character as a reason for electing him to office—who plays this game of posturing regardless of the harm he is doing to the civility necessary to a Republic large and various if it is to preserve the axiological silence or compromise on which its future depends. Political or social reform enacted according to the example set by the Republicans in the period 1854-1877 takes almost no account of what is to be done after "virtue" has triumphed, of how business in any ordinary atmosphere might then be conducted without endless repetitions of the crusade just concluded. And precisely that sort of chain reaction almost occurred—as it had in the England of the 1640s—after Lincoln's election in 1860, and has threatened to occur on numerous occasions since. In announcing that he expected the nation to become "*all* one thing, or *all* another" by reason of his fortune in a federal election, Lincoln declared war on "the old policy of the Fathers." The pretense that slavery was established by being left as optional in open territories (a constant possibility from 1787-1860) was no more than a bugbear. It had been exploded every time a territory voted not to establish slavery, and when Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio voted not to change from "free" to slaveholding states. Moreover, Lincoln's talk of Democratic plans to enslave white men was a scare tactic unworthy of a man of his stature—an instance of the rhetorical *diaboli*, in the face of which no Union could survive. Such rhetoric was a form of disloyalty to the "political religion" Lincoln early claimed to profess and has become, since he borrowed the technique from Seward and Chase, a ground for objecting to his continuing influence among us.

What Southerners call "the War" was, therefore, about many things, including slavery and its future as a "domestic institution": about the problem of internal variety of any kind and the distrust it generates. But mostly it was about power, who was to "have the stick" and on what grounds; and about whether Americans could live together under the Constitution, according to the example left to us in the records of the Great Convention of 1787, or else violate the accommodations to which we had freely agreed in that setting, insisting instead on the right of mere majorities (without amendment of the Constitution) to violate our pledge of comity, to interpret and enforce the fundamental law at their whim. That principle should rightly inspire either legal and political resistance or outright revolution whenever it is sounded in our midst. Only the craven and the servile can let it pass without challenge—despicable characters, no more acceptable to Harry Jaffa than to me. □

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CONSTITUTIONAL OPINIONS

THE MEESE THAT ROARS

by William Kristol

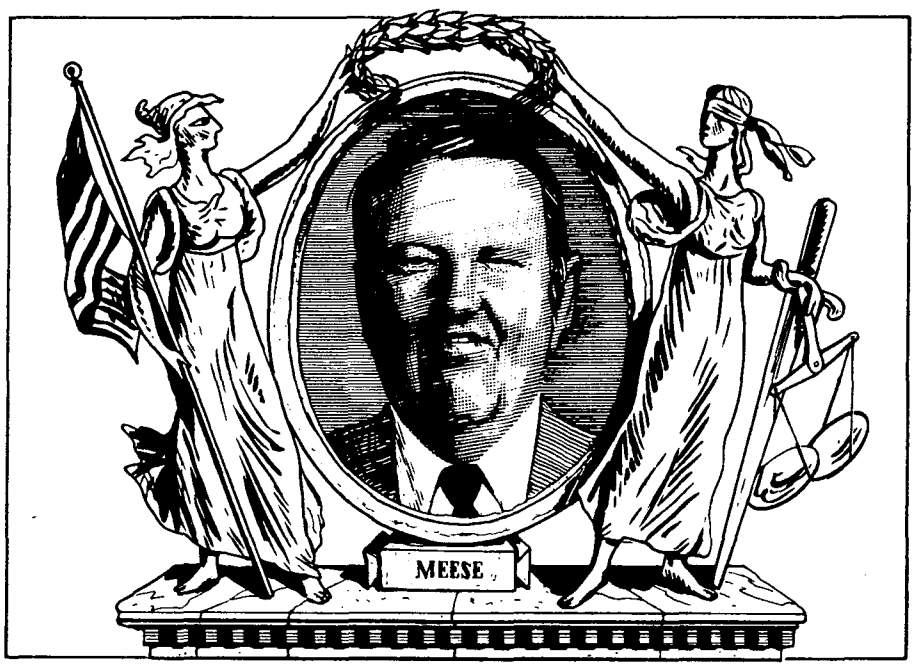
"What does not kill me makes me stronger." This thought of Nietzsche's—introduced into American political discourse by (who else?) G. Gordon Liddy—may have heartened Edwin Meese III during the difficult year between his nomination and his swearing in as Attorney General. Such a thought may even have inspired him to remain unbowed in the face of the Democratic taunts at his final Senate confirmation hearings that he was "beneath the office" of Attorney General, and then, once confirmed, to take vigorous command of the office.

For as Attorney General, Mr. Meese has shown no ill effects of his ordeal. In his first few weeks in office, he has announced initiatives in areas ranging from school discipline to drug enforcement; he has made impressive appointments—notably, the promotion of William Bradford Reynolds to Associate Attorney General and the selection of *TAS* contributor Terry Eastland as Director of the Office of Public Affairs; and he has spoken confidently and forthrightly of his plans in a variety of areas, including criminal justice, civil rights law, and legal services for the poor. With the further influence that will come as chairman of the Cabinet co-ordinating council on domestic and social policy, Attorney General Meese should be a man to be reckoned with in the Reagan Administration's second term.

This could be significant, for Mr. Meese has great hopes for that second term. In late January, he stated that its guiding purpose should be to do what FDR did with the policies of the New Deal: "to institutionalize the Reagan revolution so it can't be set aside no matter what happens in future presidential elections." While this may reflect an excessive confidence in one administration's ability to control the future, Mr. Meese is well placed to play a major role in institutionalizing the Reagan revolution, presiding as he does (in the words of the *Wall Street Journal*) "over the federal department most actively engaged in implementing President Reagan's political and social philosophies." But in order to institutionalize the Reagan revolution, Mr. Meese will have to move beyond the energetic pursuit of certain discrete policy goals; he will have to shape a set of policies that look toward a fundamental redirection of the course of constitutional interpretation, the role of the courts, and the character of the legal system.

Christopher Wolfe of Marquette University has described the theory and practice of contemporary constitutional interpretation as taking the Constitution out of constitutional law. This phenomenon is not just a matter of a few sloppy decisions or stretched interpretations. It is a matter of a long train of abuses and usurpations which, if they do not pursue invariably the same object, do rest on an underlying understanding of constitutional law as a vehicle for social justice and "moral evolution." Much of contemporary constitutional law thus uses the Constitution merely as a point of departure; at the end of the long journey from that point lies a host of decisions that have little to do with the Constitution, the intent of its framers, or the meaning of its language, and that have everything to do with various law professors' views of equality, social policy, and individual autonomy—views that have not on the whole been ratified by the American people. *Roe* v. *Wade* is the capstone of contemporary constitutional interpretation, not just because of its great practical effect, and not because it is bad constitutional law, but because, as John Hart Ely of Stanford Law School has said, "it is *not* constitutional law and gives almost no sense of an obligation to try to be."

How can the Justice Department contribute to a reformation of constitutional law? The most obvious means is through judicial selection. One presumes that Mr. Meese, toughened by his own experience at the hands of liberal senators, will not be impressed by their complaints about "ideological"—that is to say, constitutional—"litmus tests." In fact, should he feel himself wavering under the onslaught of law professors and senators marching under the banner of judicial integrity, Mr. Meese might remind himself of Senator Metzenbaum's amazing response to the suggestion that President Carter also sought judges who shared his views: "I don't think so," Metzenbaum said. "They were looking for more blacks, Hispanics, and women, and they were effective. But that does not necessarily imply getting more liberals than conservatives because there's no correlation." Since Senator Metzenbaum in the same breath praised Justice O'Connor for her refusal, at the confirmation hearings, to answer questions on past cases or constitutional doctrines ("I think she's right on target. To answer such a question would destroy the impartiality of the jurist when a case comes up in the future"), Mr. Meese should be emboldened to insist on the propriety of looking at prospective judges' previous writings and opinions, and of asking them to comment on past decisions, particular doctrines, or general modes of interpretation. (It would, of course, be improper to ask a prospective judge to commit himself to vote one way or another on a particular case.) But Mr. Meese and President Reagan should probably resist the temptation to test the professed belief of liberals that "only the necessary intellect, temperament, and integrity" should be relevant in judicial appointments (as the *Boston Globe* has stated) by appointing an intelligent, temperate, and honest constitutional defender of, say, *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*.



But sound judicial appointments must be supplemented—indeed, preceded—by a coherent and forthright articulation of constitutional principles by the Justice Department itself. This will require more boldness than lawyers are comfortable with. But when President Reagan has written, "Make no mistake, abortion-on-demand is not a right granted by the Constitution," and when he has endorsed various congressional efforts "to reverse this tragic policy," it is a bit ridiculous for the Justice Department to fail to argue for reversal, when it has the chance, before the Supreme Court. Yet the Justice Department was unwilling to argue that *Roe* v. *Wade* was wrongly decided when it appeared before the Court in 1983 to urge (unsuccessfully) the upholding of laws passed by the city of

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Akron and the state of Missouri regulating abortions in a variety of minimally restrictive ways. Attorney General Meese recently said in a television interview that "*Roe* v. *Wade* is bad law"; let his Justice Department uphold that position when the constitutionality of a Pennsylvania abortion statute comes before the Supreme Court next fall. This of course does not preclude making, in a lawyerly way, arguments for why the statute can be upheld even if the Court is unwilling to overrule *Roe* v. *Wade*; but it would be an important contribution to the public discourse—and quite possibly to future judicial decisions—if the Department generally used its briefs to articulate fundamental constitutional principles clearly and coherently.

Indeed, the effort to set forth constitutional principles should not be restricted to litigation. If Attorney General Meese agrees with Mr. Reynolds that the Constitution requires that government be color-blind, he may want to introduce legislation repealing the 10-percent minority business quota for a series of public works programs approved by Congress in 1978 (and upheld by the Supreme Court in *Fullilove* v. *Klutznick*). For Congress has an obligation to live up to constitutional standards as much as do the other branches. More generally, Mr. Meese might choose to issue a series of "opinions of the Attorney General" laying out the Reagan Administration's understanding of basic constitutional principles in a variety of areas such as the separation of powers, federalism, and religion. This would make available an alternative body of constitutional interpretation to that of the courts in recent years, one which might guide public understanding and which the courts might gradually move toward embracing. Such an effort—though undoubtedly controversial—would make it in the end more difficult for the Reagan Administration to be accused simply of mean-spiritedness or opportunism in its various efforts at litigation and legislation; such an effort would make it more difficult for a *New York Times* reporter—in a news story, not an opinion piece—to claim (incredibly) that judicial decisions in the area of affirmative action "are far more closely reasoned than the polemics of politicians and advocates on either side." In fact, the polemics of advocates on *both* sides are probably more closely reasoned than the majority of judicial decisions in this area—because so much of our constitutional doctrine (and of our interpretation of certain statutes, like the 1964 Civil Rights Act) now resembles a rambling, disjointed, Byzantine edifice that does not allow close or coherent reasoning. Rather than simply add another wing to this edifice, Mr. Meese's Justice Department may well choose to start on a project of major constitutional renovation.

Such a project would involve not only reshaping constitutional doctrines, but also restoring the branches of government—and particularly the courts—to their proper role in the constitutional scheme. Confronting the imperial judiciary requires first of all confronting the overblown claims made on its behalf, in particular the claim, made in the Little Rock School case in 1958 by the Supreme Court, that "the federal judiciary is supreme in the exposition of the law of the Constitution." Respected constitutional scholars such as Gerald Gunther have decried this claim of "judicial exclusiveness," but the notion that it is primarily or even solely up to the judiciary to interpret *the Constitution* has become deeply embedded not only in the law schools but in our public discourse.

Thus Mr. Meese himself, stressing the importance of sound judicial selections, commented in an interview that "the judiciary is probably conceptually the most powerful arm of govern-

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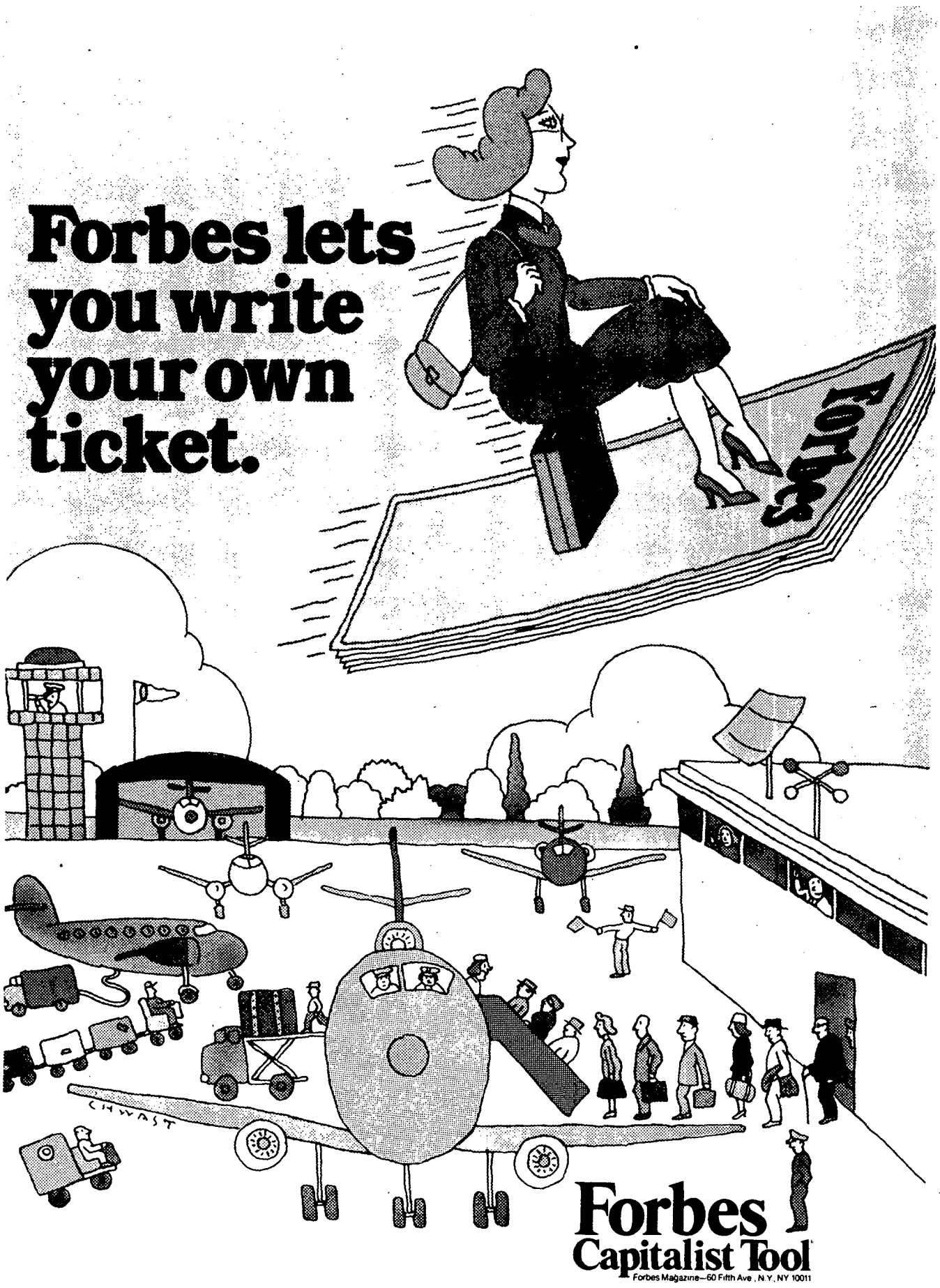
ment because it has the last word." That may be so most of the time, in practice. But it cannot be allowed to be so always, as a matter of right: As Madison said in 1788, this would make "the Judiciary Department paramount in fact to the legislature, which was never intended and can never be proper."

Now, one incidental benefit of the Reagan Administration's advancing its own constitutional interpretation would be the implicit repudiation of the claim of judicial paramountcy. But this claim should also be countered explicitly, by reiterating Lincoln's explanation in his first Inaugural: While Supreme Court decisions must be binding upon the parties to a suit, and while those decisions are entitled to high respect by the other branches, "the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the Government upon vital questions affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instance they are made in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their Government into the hands of the eminent tribunal." Mr. Meese should welcome the chance to have the Reagan Justice Department make the case for self-government against government by the judiciary, as it makes the case for the Constitution of the Founders against the constitutional doctrines of the law professors.



Apart from its claims to supremacy in constitutional interpretation and its stretching of the Constitution in making its interpretations, the imperial judiciary manifests itself most clearly in its exercise of vast power through the mechanism of equitable remedies (combined with class actions): It is under the rubric of remedying violations of rights that judges exercise open-ended and absolute control over school systems once found to have discriminated, or not to have vigorously enough integrated. And the exercise of judicial power has been made far easier by the enlargement of the number and kinds of cases that the courts take it upon themselves to decide, thanks to the liberalization of doctrines of standing and of case and controversy requirements. These aspects of the imperial judiciary can be attacked through a strategy consisting in part of raising these issues in litigation. (Is busing an appropriate remedy? Should it not at some point be brought to an end?) But they can also be attacked through legislation designed to curb remedies or to limit standing—both matters which, to a large degree, clearly fall within congressional control.

In fact, Congress bears much of the responsibility for the imperial judiciary, not only because of a failure to exert itself to correct statutory interpretations or to limit remedies, but also because of a positive inclination to shirk its duty by, say, providing for "citizen standing" in various pieces of legislation so as to slough responsibility for control of the executive onto the courts. Indeed, the increasing practice of congressional lawsuits against the executive is the most manifest instance of congressional abdication. Judge Robert Bork, in a recent dissent, argued that the courts should "renounce outright the whole notion of congressional standing," unsupported as it is "in the Constitution, in case law, in logic, or in any proper conception of the relationship of courts to democracy," and resulting as it will in "an enormous and uncontrollable expansion of judicial power." The Administration could do far more, in this and other instances, to highlight congressional abdication of its responsibility, and—by proposing legislation on remedies, on standing, on disputed issues of statutory interpretation—to put the ball of policy-making more clearly in Congress's court. Let con-

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gressmen then explain to their constituents why they prefer to have unelected judges govern.

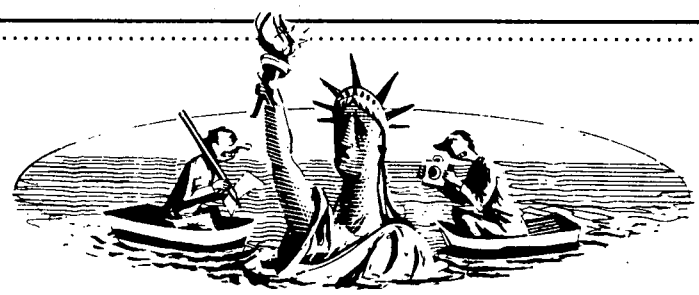
Finally, in his spare time, Mr. Meese may want to begin confronting the phenomenon of the litigious society. This phenomenon is so large and complex that it does not lend itself to a clear policy agenda. But Mr. Meese may at least want to foster discussion of how to reduce "the burden of law, lawyers, litigation, and legal fees on our society," in the words of a recent report of the Committee on the Next Agenda, a committee that included former Reagan adviser Martin Anderson and Heritage Foundation President Edwin Feulner. Mr. Meese may want to make suggestions along the lines proposed by this committee—opening up some legal services to competition from non-lawyers, greater use of mediation and conciliation instead of trials, restrictions on federal *habeas corpus* appeals, charging private parties the full court costs of their lawsuits, and narrower drafting of federal legislation. There are many other possible lines of approach. (Mr. Meese has himself raised the possibility of "justice system impact statements" prepared by the Justice Department to alert Congress, and the public, to the implications of proposed legislation.) Perhaps the best strategy would be to constitute a presidential commission on the subject in order to give it a thorough treatment and to suggest appropriate federal and state actions. The only desideratum of such a commission is that it be headed by a non-lawyer. (James Q. Wilson or Walter Berns come to mind.)

The advantage of focusing at least some attention on the broad problem of the litigious society is that this issue is less controversial than the Constitution or the courts. Virtually everyone outside the organized Bar agrees that our tort law, our malpractice law, and our product liability law (to name three) do not produce much in the way of justice or social efficiency. But the spirit that lies behind developments in these areas, and behind the growth of the litigious society generally, also animates contemporary constitutional interpretation and the imperial judiciary. This is a spirit of allegiance to "due process" at whatever cost and to "rights" understood in an abstract and virtually limitless way; it results in an inclination to meddle endlessly with the world as it is in the hope of arranging everything just so—without considering whether things will work out just so. The spirit of the litigious society is that of a society of plaintiffs. A commitment to "de-litigation" would therefore go hand in hand with the vision of an opportunity society consisting of self-governing citizens taking responsibility for their affairs.

The notion of taking on modern constitutional law, the imperial judiciary, and the litigious society may seem rather implausible. All three are part of a tide that has been running strongly for quite a while. Would it not be more reasonable to try to erect some small barriers and start some counter-eddies? Tides can reverse quite suddenly, and in the social world, it is often when a tide is judged irreversible that it has in fact reached its high-water mark.

In 1983, after years of worrying about the counter-revolutionary threat of the Burger Court, a book of essays by law professors appeared finally admitting—or rather announcing—that the Burger Court consisted of "a counter-revolution that wasn't." In the preface to that book, Anthony Lewis crowed that "we are all judicial activists now": Old-fashioned views of the judicial function were dead. And it was about the same time that a book entitled *The Litigious Society* appeared with its argument that such a situation was more or less inevitable in the modern world. Predictably, therefore, it was in the Court's 1983-84 term that the first glimmerings of constitutional counter-revolution began to appear; it was around then that President Bok of Harvard helped legitimize the assault on the litigious society; and it was then that one could begin to wonder whether Anthony Lewis, in echoing Richard Nixon's 1971 statement that "we are all Keynesians now," would look as short-sighted from the perspective of the 1990s as Mr. Nixon now looks from the perspective of the 1980s. The tide of judicial activism may now have crested, but it will not be reversed without bold actions by Mr. Meese. Not the least benefit of reversing the tide would be to refute the notion, so deadly to self-government, that we are swept along by tides of history beyond our control. □

PRESSWATCH



BAD NEWS BEARERS

by John O'Sullivan

What am I doing in this space? Well, the fact is that Ariel Sharon came too expensive. Also, there were fears that if he should be installed in "Presswatch," it might upset the entire balance of power in the region. "Capitol Ideas," "Editorials," "Book Reviews," and even "The Continuing Crisis" were nervous that tank formations might suddenly mass on their frontiers. In such circumstances, even RET himself might sink to the level of a fifth-class power. It did not bear thinking about. So the phone rang and I accepted the portfolio.

Frankly, I am rather sorry—and not for the obvious reason that the principal effect of a column of media criticism is to alienate potential employers and colleagues. No, my regret is that, like his other readers, I shall miss the incomparable Fred. His remarkable achievement in this space was to write a column that never shrank from justified, documented, and occasionally savage criticism of his peers, but never exhibited a note of peevish nagging. It is nice to know that I and others addicted to the special brand of Barnesian upbeat political journalism will normally be able to find him on another page.

Having said that, I must add that I take a slightly gloomier view than he about the spread of the belief in media circles that conservatives now dominate even there. For what it means is that not only do liberals retain the power in such establishment outposts as the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and the three networks, but they have grabbed the prestige of being the underdog too. Not content with being the giant, liberals also want to play Jack the Giant Killer, his mother, his girl Sal, and the pantomime horse—Carl Rowan being particularly effective in this latter role.

With only three paragraphs gone, the seemingly eternal debate on "Are the media liberal?" has surfaced. To the charge of predictability I plead guilty but provoked—and cite in evidence an article by Richard Cohen in the *Washington Post*. For Mr. Cohen's article marks a new stage in the "Are the media liberal?" debate. The customary liberal response to this question is (a) to deny it, or (b) as a fall-back position, to admit that, yes, journalists are by and large liberal but that they wouldn't dream of letting this interfere with their work.

Mr. Cohen grandly disdains such subterfuges. He embraces the accusation proudly because liberalism, you see, is neither more nor less than journalistic professionalism. The worldview that Senator Jesse Helms denounces as liberal, claims Mr. Cohen, "is one most journalists would call professional. It is a mentality that entails skepticism, aggressiveness in news gathering and, I suppose, holding the wacky belief that, say, poverty is usually a better story than prosperity."

By this token, conservatives are presumably credulous, timid, and likely to believe that the press should concentrate on rich people in minks driving around in Cadillacs—hang on for a

John O'Sullivan, formerly editor of Policy Review *and editor at the* London Daily Telegraph, *is the editorial page editor of the* New York Post.

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moment, surely it wasn't the liberal media which determined that the big story at the 1981 inauguration was rich people in Cadillacs. It was only later that the poverty caused by the Reagan welfare "cuts" became the media's abiding passion. That was a distinctly prescient passion, incidentally, because the stories lamenting the poverty first appeared shortly before the "cuts" had gone into effect. Subsequently, when the U.S. economy started its dramatic revival in 1983 and prosperity became a perfectly legitimate news story, the media showed a remarkable lack of interest in the fact. Unwelcome good news was typically presented thus: "Unemployment fell again this month—but in fact there was still little relief from the grim picture of continued joblessness." And this approach continues. See, for instance, the recent headline in the Sunday *New York Times* business section: "A Steady C.P.I.—For Now."

But Mr. Cohen takes such matters in his complacent stride. When Senator Helms complains about liberal bias, "he is complaining about its vitality, its energy, its determination to confront the nation with the worst news of all—bad news." If this were true, it would paradoxically be good news. But is the press really determined to make us face *all kinds of bad news*? Did it seek out, for instance, the bad news about Geraldine Ferraro's finances and odd family connections skeptically, aggressively, and energetically? Hardly. The liberal feminist influence in the media ensured that the story was at first ignored, then pursued reluctantly and timidly when the non-liberal media turned up embarrassing details, and finally dropped altogether when Mrs. Ferraro laid out for inspection a distinctly partial and inadequate account of her family finances. A *Wall Street Journal* reporter who persisted in questioning her at the press conference was booed by other journalists for his unseemly curiosity. And the liberal media's version of these events became "Why are we persecuting Mrs. Ferraro?" (This example of liberal desire to feel guilt for sins they haven't committed followed quickly on their earlier and equally needless guilt trip over "Why have we been so biased in favor of Ronald Reagan?" Perhaps someone should recommend that these guilt-ridden innocents try a few sessions with a really skilled dominatrix; the result might be much less neurotic journalism.)

When we turn to international affairs, the "bad news" stories in particular have received scant liberal attention. First the Cambodian genocide, though indignantly denounced today, was ignored by much of the liberal media when it was actually taking place. The networks in particular were not disposed to devote much time to it, plainly feeling that a Cambodian or Vietnamese bloodbath might make the Vietnam war seem justified.

A particularly graphic example springs to mind. In January 1978, the American Security Council held a press conference in Washington, D.C., at which a Cambodian refugee, Pin Yathay, described how his wife, three children, and other close relatives had perished in the Khmer Rouge massacres. Few major media representatives were present. And one who was, Elizabeth Becker of the *Washington Post,* left halfway through the conference. An employee of the ASC claimed that Ms. Becker, while putting on her coat, had remarked that she had heard enough of this "junk." Ms. Becker subsequently denied making the remark, but no report of Pin Yathay's story appeared in the *Post.* And when the indispensable Reed Irvine of Accuracy in Media inquired why it had been ignored, he was told by the news editor Larry Stern that it was because they had run many such stories. Mr. Irvine's check through the files, however, could not find this great multiplicity of stories, or indeed any. Ho hum. In the same year Richard Dudman of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* returned from Cambodia to report a housing boom there—and in a macabre way, he may have been right. By 1978 there was probably a very favorable ratio of houses to population. But these events occurred before the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia made it respectable to believe in Pol Pot's massacres.

A second topic where bad news has not exactly been aggressively sought is arms control. It is not so much that the liberal media are uninterested in Soviet violations of arms control pacts as that they are positively hostile to such reports. The big story on such occasions is not the violations themselves, but the embarrassment reports of them will naturally cause Secretary Shultz and President Reagan. Such solicitude is rare. In January the *New York Times* devoted a front-page story to the news that an official report cataloguing seventeen Soviet violations was the work of someone who "made no secret of his disdain for arms control accords." Those seventeen major violations might be thought by you and me to justify the critic's disdain. But the *Times* evidently felt that his disdain discredited the report of the violations. The sigh of relief could almost be heard from the printed page.

Alas, the liberal media do not report all kinds of bad news with fine impartiality. They concentrate on those brands of bad news that are good for liberalism. But Mr. Cohen is being quite sincere in not seeing this plain fact. For the true mark of prejudice is not being fiercely opposed to other views—it is not realizing that there are other views. Like most of his colleagues, Mr. Cohen thinks that other people have opinions, but he simply reports the facts. Reality is the name he gives to his mistakes. So when he expresses liberal opinion he is simply telling it like it is. What could be fairer than that?

In recent days, however, it is not Cambodia but an earlier genocide which has dominated the news. President Reagan's decision to lay a wreath at Bitburg military cemetery during his May visit to Germany has stirred up a vast, unnecessary controversy. The discovery of the forty-seven SS graves at Bitburg gave the President a choice of evils. He could either go ahead with the ceremony—and offend veteran and Jewish organizations and a great many other people—or cancel it—and offend the West Germans. At the time of writing, Mr. Reagan has stuck to the wrong choice and, still worse, defended it with crass and foolish arguments. One is reminded of Boulay de la Meurthe's comment on Napoleon's execution of the Duc d'Enghien: "Worse than a crime—it's a blunder."

On this occasion, the White House can have no complaint about the news reports. Nothing was artificially manufactured. The accounts were perfectly fair. It was possible to discover from them exactly how this blunder was conceived and allowed to flourish. And the blunder was presented as a blunder, not as a crime.

The analysis and comments in editorials and columns were another matter. Several columns hinted nastily that Mr. Reagan's errors and follies on this occasion told us something deeply significant about his character. In Mr. James Reston's formula: He shows no "sensitivity to the memories and sufferings of the last half-century." And in Mr. Anthony Lewis's view: "He sees nothing unique in the evil of the Holocaust" and cannot distinguish between "reconciliation with Germany and reconciliation with the Nazi experience." I think the reader can see well enough in what direction such comments are pointing.

Now, Mr. Reagan certainly laid himself open to such attacks by one or two offensive and ridiculous arguments—notably, that German soldiers were every bit as much victims of Nazism as were the Jewish prisoners in Dachau and Auschwitz. A soldier who dies fighting is a victim of his government's policies in a metaphorical sense. But the death camp victims were victims in the plainest possible sense of the word—and they were victims, moreover, of the very government which the soldiers were fighting to defend. This is not meant to suggest that every German soldier was guilty of Nazism—that notion was scotched by the Nuremberg trials—merely that the comparison was inapt and offensive.

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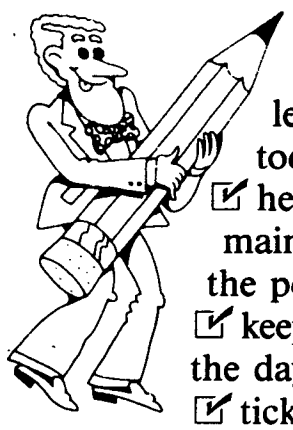

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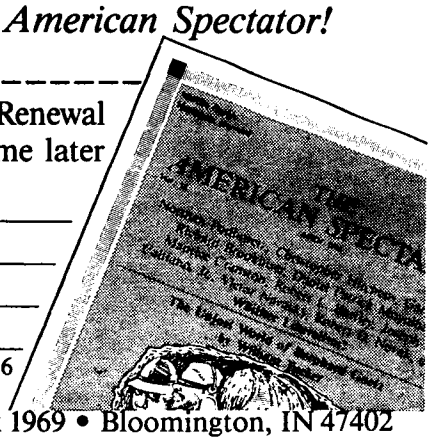

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But to lay oneself open to attack does not justify any and every attack. Take, for instance, Mr. Reston's and Mr. Lewis's charge of insensitivity to evil. In the past it is President Reagan's exaggerated sensitivity to evil which has disturbed liberal commentators. His criticism of the evil empire that did not fall in 1945 but threatens us and its own subjects still, used to strike these worldly people as unsophisticated, naive, and dangerous. Many of those who now call for simple moral statements recognizing the distinction between good and evil were two years ago wearily dismissing just such a statement as simplistic rhetoric. It was said to be an obstacle to good relations with the Soviet Union, with which we had to "deal." Were there still large numbers of political prisoners, concentration camps, slave labor, and anti-Jewish discrimination? These things were wrong, of course. But they should not be allowed too much weight. People who employed such arguments—displaying, as they do, an insensitivity to the memories and sufferings of the past half-century—might properly pause before launching this particular attack.

The President may also have thought he was using liberal arguments when he defended the wreath-laying. Reconciliation, forgetting the past, looking to the future—these are the staple catchphrases of liberalism. There is a certain irony in being attacked by liberals for using them. Mr. Lewis accuses the President of wishing to suppress the past, even to the point of confusing the German people and the Nazi experience. But this argument hinges on a confusion between two different meanings of the word "remember." It can mean not forgetting—and Mr. Reagan has amply made clear that he does not think that the Holocaust should be forgotten. But it can also mean the more vigorous process of being reminded. Opinions will legitimately differ. But it is at least arguable that West Germans need not be constantly reminded by others that they are the nation that was guilty of a great historical crime. They know that. Political movements which try to deny it have been given very short shrift by the German electorate. But sometimes other topics should be emphasized in our dealings with them. That was, I take it, the President's meaning when he decided not to visit a death camp. He was, in my view, mistaken. But neither his words nor his actions will bear the monstrous interpretation that he was anxious to sweep the Holocaust under some vast historical carpet.

Why, then, did he not cancel the wreath-laying ceremony at Bitburg once he heard of the SS graves? Plainly, the reason was that by then it was being regarded by many Germans, including the Kohl government, as a test of U.S. friendship. It is a bad, indeed absurd, test. And it will not achieve its purposes. The controversy it has given rise to here prevents its providing the reconciliation it was intended to achieve. Mr. Reagan should have canceled it and compensated with some such gesture as posthumously conferring U.S. citizenship on Konrad Adenauer, the greatest statesman in German history and a great friend of the U.S.

But when the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the friend of Louis Farrakhan, can denounce Mr. Reagan for complicity with Nazism and raise not a peep of skepticism from liberal commentators, something is indeed happening—and it's not the drawing of clear distinctions between good and evil. □

THE NATION'S PULSE

HUG YOUR KID, GO TO JAIL

by David L. Kirp

Until he was arrested last August, charged with having sexually molested a nine-year-old girl, Brian Taugher had never been in trouble with the law. Indeed, the 37-year-old Taugher epitomized the law. He had spent his entire professional life in California's criminal law enforcement bureaucracy before being named California attorney general John Van De Kamp's chief legislative aide. In that job, Taugher was a vocal advocate of stiffer child abuse laws.

But according to his young accuser, there was another Brian Taugher—the man who "hurt me." The girl had spent the night at a slumber party at Taugher's home, celebrating the birthday of one of his daughters with hot dogs, cake, and a showing of *Popeye*. According to her later accounts, Taugher waited until all six girls were asleep. Then he entered the room, unzipped the girl's sleeping bag, and lay on top of her, nude, for several minutes. Neither Taugher nor the child made a sound during that time.

Some weeks later, when the girl told her mother what had occurred, the child was taken to a doctor who found what he labeled "abrasions," bruises in the vaginal area. Armed with this report and no more—no thorough questioning of the girl, no interrogation of Taugher at all—the police picked Taugher up and jailed him overnight. His two daughters, with him at the time of arrest, were not taken to the home of his ex-wife, who has legal custody, but were delivered to the county Children's Receiving Home, which usually houses abused and abandoned youngsters. There they were given full body searches, as one of the daughters testified in court, grilled for hours, and pressured into admitting that their father had molested them too. Meanwhile, in a vain attempt to elicit a confession from Taugher, the sheriff's office convinced the girl's mother to make an accusatory phone call to Taugher, which was secretly taped.

The case against Taugher began falling apart when it came to court in December. A neighbor testified that the girl had a bad habit of embroidering the truth. A psychiatrist, appearing on behalf of the prosecution (at $1,000 a day), claimed that the child's behavior —not crying out, appearing altogether normal the morning following the alleged incident, waiting weeks before saying anything to her mother—was consistent with what he termed the Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome. But on cross-examination the psychologist acknowledged that his "syndrome" was nothing more than a description of how children behave; a youngster who hadn't been abused, he admitted, might have had exactly the same reaction. Nor did the prosecutor's

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medical evidence hold up. A pediatrician who examined the young girl concluded that the vaginal bruises, the only corroboration of her story, were actually—and innocuously—a small vein under the surface of the skin.

Taugher was acquitted. But the verdict hasn't really settled things. There are some who remain convinced that Taugher got off only because of who he is. Amateur psychologists have posited that the girl may indeed have been molested, but by someone closer to her—and thus harder to accuse—than Taugher.

Taugher himself was ambivalent about the meaning of his ordeal. Immediately after the verdict was announced, he observed that "for years, we didn't find child abuse when it was there. Now we are in danger of finding it when it is not there." But when Taugher appeared, a week later, as the star witness for the attorney general's commission on child abuse, he sang a very different song. Tougher enforcement of laws against child molestation is urgent, he declared. "My case wasn't typical."

Taugher had it right the first time. Sex abuse is not just a product of the overheated imaginations of the young and the misplaced solicitude of their elders. Nor should it remain a secret shame, as it was until very recently. When children are turned into objects for the sexual pleasure of grownups, the perpetrators should be locked up for a very long time. But in attending to the heretofore unmentionable, matters have gotten entirely out of hand. The new hysteria over child sex abuse, and the panicky overreactions that this hysteria is generating, may be as dangerous as the repressions that have been cast aside.

Little of this skepticism is apparent in the news reports, which treat molestation as if it were the AIDS of the young. It is impossible to pick up a daily newspaper without coming across another accusation, some as mundane as the indiscretions of a dirty Uncle Harry, others every bit as lurid as historic accounts of witches' sabbaths. A septuagenarian grandmother, who for decades ran a day-care program in Southern California, is reported to have presided over orgies featuring the slaughter of animals—and threats that the children would suffer similar fates if they unbuttoned their lips. Investigations and arrests at day-care centers in half a dozen states, including New York and Illinois, suggest that these places aren't havens but Sadean rings. Panic spread to the heartland with tales of incest, sodomy, bestiality—even ritual murders—in the farm community of Jordan, Minnesota. That story eventually collapsed on itself, with an admission by the talebearer that he had made it all up, in hopes of getting a reduced jail term for molestations that he had indeed committed. But people still wonder aloud just how many real Jordans might be out there, undiscovered.

This hysterical concern feeds on itself. After the comic character Spiderman let his young readers know that he had been sexually abused as a child, thousands of youngsters stepped forward with their own accounts of molestation. The topic, once a television taboo, has become a media cliché: "Drug-addicted child runs away after being molested by parents who have Alzheimer's disease and drive when drunk" is how *Los Angeles Times* television critic Howard Rosenberg summarizes the standard plot. Sex abuse is now the stuff of multi-part newspaper stories and a big-ticket item for the networks, which run "docu-dramas" about child molestation to boost audience size during the ratings sweeps period.

The statistics on child abuse reflect this growing attention. In 1984, the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect gathered more than a million-and-a-quarter reports of abuse, up nine

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times in the past two decades and 20 percent in just one year. Reports of sexual molestation have increased at twice as rapid a rate, and now number more than a quarter of a million annually.

These numbers have triggered what California Congressman George Miller calls a "three-alarm fire" in Congress. The legislators first offered a symbolic response, naming April 1984 "National Child Abuse Month"; then, with uncharacteristic dispatch, they passed legislation mandating national standards for day-care centers.

Cities and states have been even more active. Last year, New York City Mayor Ed Koch reported that fingerprint checks of 82 day-care workers found 36 with criminal records. (Koch was uncharacteristically silent when it turned out that, among some 6,000 day-care workers and job-seekers, just 3.8 percent had criminal convictions, less than half of one percent for felonies.) In California, more than 50 child abuse bills, concerning everything from parent training to longer jail terms and new reporting requirements, were introduced in 1984; dozens more have been added this term. Lawmakers are outdoing themselves with diatribes against "this carnage [that] must stop—now" and a challenge, issued by California Governor George Deukmejian to the state's police officers, to "stop this sickness."

What gets lost in the pop culture blitz and the political posturing is the fact that most reported instances of sex abuse—eight out of every ten—turn out to be unfounded. That's double the ratio of five years ago. It translates into about 200,000 false alarms a year.

That's also 200,000 badly wounded reputations. "Trust the children," argue those who have made the cause their own, "because children don't lie." That is the rationale for acting faster on reports of molestation. It's also the rationale for easing the burden on youngsters who testify in sex abuse cases by shortening the cross-examination, physically removing children from the intimidating presence of the alleged abusers, and providing them with the counsel of a "special friend" while testifying. But when the word of a child is the only evidence—unlike instances of physical abuse, there is usually no corroboration of molestation—trust should be given carefully and conditionally.

Some children do lie. In a not atypical case, a Southern California junior high school girl accused her teacher, William Gillett, of molesting her. Gillett was carried off, handcuffed, by the local police. Three weeks later, after Gillett had quit his job, the girl admitted that she had made up the story to "get" him for giving her a low grade.

What's more important is that, for children, the line between lying and truth-telling, between experience and fantasy, is far from clear. And to complicate things further, adults' expectations can shape children's perceptions. Some of the youngsters in Jordan were questioned as often as 29 times by as many as five different interrogators, whose queries were often phrased suggestively. When coached and cajoled by adults intent on rooting out sexual mistreatment, it is small wonder that, after a while, some children will try to please their elders by telling them what they so manifestly want to hear. It is as if, at its most extreme, the anti-sex abuse squad had borrowed its tactics from Joe McCarthy.

Once accused, suspicion lingers, as the Brian Taughers and William Gilletts have learned. And the suspicions also touch the lives of countless individuals, children and adults, whose names never show up on police blotters.

All California children, as well as youngsters in school districts throughout the country, are now participating in a classroom program aimed at helping them to distinguish "good touch" from "bad touch," and so handle the dirty Uncle Harrys of the world. The program includes dramatizations of child abuse situations and a great deal of induced self-disclosure, as the classroom is transformed into a collective analyst's couch. This course will doubtless keep some children free from sexual harm. But others, insensitively taught, will come home scared of intimacy, suspicious of all forms of affection—loving and nurturing as well as abusive—and incapable of distinguishing the one from the other.

Those who care for the young, especially day-care workers and schoolteachers, find themselves on the defensive. They are reluctant to change an infant's diapers. They are even reluctant to hug a crying child or let a youngster climb into their lap for a story, out of fear that someone will observe and misinterpret what is going on. For their part, social workers who are supposed to be looking after the interests of children are buried under the mountains of reports that the doctors and teachers and pharmacists are submitting. "Half of our staff is just taking reports, building a paper record," says the head of the San Mateo, California social welfare office. But, she adds, "the serious cases often got lost in the shuffle," disappearing into what caseworkers euphemize as "the Bank."

In a country whose collective attention span sometimes resembles that of a two-year-old, it may be that indifference can be overcome and popular interest generated only by turning a complex social reality into a simple morality play. After all, there's not much of a market for ambiguity out there. This latest campaign has indeed banished indifference about the sexual abuse of children, and that's all to the good. But taking the lid off the topic has also put the accusation of molestation on too many lips and in too many minds. In so doing, it has turned the most intimate—and often the most innocent—of relations between the generations into the seedbed of distrust. □

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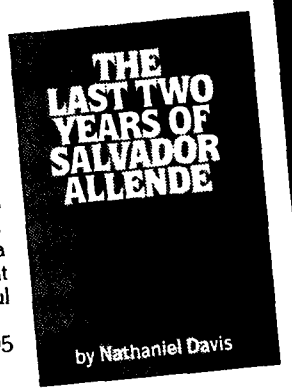

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BOOK REVIEWS

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Charles R. Kesler

Ask a conservative to discuss the axioms of his politics, and the conversation will soon come around to the political philosophy of Edmund Burke. American conservatives have long been attracted to Burke—at least since Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* (1953)—but their attempts to propagate his principles have always faced an embarrassing obstacle: namely, the almost complete lack of a Burkean tradition in America. To the extent that there is such a tradition, it can be summed up, exasperatingly, in that arch description of conservatives "standing athwart history and yelling 'Stop!'" Of course, history has not stopped, and so one wonders what exactly it is that conservatives want. Is it to be the governing majority in American politics, taking responsibility for the direction of our history, or is it to be a pristine Remnant, standing back from history and volunteering "I told you so"?

A good place to begin to think about this question as it bears on Burke and America is the *Selected Letters of Edmund Burke*, edited and introduced by Harvard political scientist Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., and recently published by the University of Chicago Press. The United States, to put it mildly, has had little truck with Burkean notions of prescriptive or inherited right and settled "establishments," and no serious conservative has ever advocated reproducing the bulwarks of the British Constitution, so beloved of Burke, here in America: the monarchy, the established Church, the great families of the landed nobility. These are impossibilities—and besides, the attempt to duplicate them in America would itself be un-Burkean, the imposition of an alien theory upon our native practice. There have been ingenious efforts to evade this dead end by finding or inventing a native Burkean tradition, dragooning John Randolph of Roanoke, Orestes Brownson, and others into the act, but these well-meaning attempts are in their own way an eloquent admission that the public life of America has been sadly un-Burkean. That is to say, you have to be so resourceful in discovering the tradition because you cannot enroll the *obvious* Americans in it—Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Lincoln, to name a few. Alas, not even Ronald Reagan seems to make the list, for he speaks the vernacular not of Burke's conservatism but of Jefferson's optimism and individualism. To be sure, some conservatives have tried to identify American Burkeanism with the cause of the Confederacy, but it is doubtful that Burke would have appreciated having his principles, which he traced to the evolving splendors of the free British Constitution, sullied with the defense of slavery.

The real mystery is why so many American conservatives have looked to Burke to find principles for American conservatism. It is telling that the Burke they have taken up is not in the first place the defender of the American Revolution, but the opponent of the French Revolution. In his brilliant *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and in the scarcely less brilliant sequels to that pamphlet, Burke attacked the French Revolution as the first "*complete* revolution," a "revolution in sentiments, manners, and moral opinions" that reached "even to the constitution of the human mind." What made it so radical was its basis in theory, in abstract or "metaphysical" principles whose extremism, universality, false simplicity, and sovereign indifference to the circumstances and consequences of political action destroyed any possibility of decent moral and political life. Burke was not opposed to change as such; in fact he held that "a state without the means of some change is without the means of its own conservation." But he was for slow change and adaptive growth; above all, he was against planned change or political action guided by theoretical reason. To contemporary conservatives, he thus comes to sight as *the* modern defender of prudence or practical reason, and perhaps even of a version of Thomistic natural law, as over against modern natural rights doctrines. Of course, American conservatives don't live in France, so Burke's denunciation of the French Revolution devolves instead upon the New Deal, or upon the world revolution led by the Soviet Union, or—and here is where the real problem begins—upon the American Revolution.

This account of Burke's political philosophy, however, slights its most distinctive theme, which is prescription, "this great fundamental part of natural law," as he called it, which describes and ought to govern the inheritance and transmission of property and constitutions from the dead to the living to the yet unborn. Prescription is not part of the natural law as described by Aquinas, nor as discussed in Cicero; it is Burke's innovation, though he would never have abided the term. Nonetheless, the implications of this new doctrine of natural law are explained with breathtaking authority and clarity in Mansfield's introduction to the *Selected Letters*, which succeeds in saying everything important about Burke's politics that could be said in so many pages. With the natural law refracted through human customs and inheritance, prudence ceases to be the virtue described by Aristotle and Aquinas, mediating between what is best everywhere and always and what is possible here and now. Instead, as Mansfield says elegantly, "prescription is prudence crystallized in theory." Burke provides what Aristotle and Aquinas would have thought a contradiction in terms—a theory of prudence, which, by making prudence immanent in the British Constitution, and in similar constitutions that have *grown* rather than been made, goes far toward identifying what is best with whatever has evolved.

Both prudence and natural law are therefore made historical, and it is this historicism—not the traces of classical natural law in Burke's thought—that exerted the greatest influence on subsequent political philosophy and political practice. Strange to say, but the single American statesman who was profoundly affected by Burke was Woodrow Wilson, whose Burkeanism was finally indistinguishable from his progressivism. But then the shift from the one to the other ought not to be perplexing, for if you identify growth with the conservation of life, and life with progress, then "the law of conservatism," as Wilson put it, "is a law of progress." At that point, the difference between conservatism and liberalism (*née* Progressivism) is simply how fast you want to go, or more precisely, how fast you think you can tolerably go. There is no debate over the destination, because both sides admit that they won't know where they are going until they get there—but that they know they aren't there yet. The only thing resembling a debate is the scramble for the accelerator and the brake. And it isn't even a fair scramble, since liberalism always gets to sit behind the wheel. This is the intellectual predicament of Burkean conservatism when it

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tries to oppose the historicism of the left; and it is the political predicament of American conservatism when it attempts to combat liberalism by modeling itself along Burkean lines.

Which is not to say that we cannot learn much from Burke. No other philosopher has written so much and so eloquently on the conditions of prudential judgment, on the importance of circumstances and consequences in evaluating political action. Nor should we forget that he was also the inventor of the idea of party government—of the legitimacy and *respectability* of an enduring party system with organized political parties competing to have a turn as the party in power. Though indirect, this was perhaps his greatest contribution to American politics. The best book on this subject, indeed the best book on Burke's political philosophy in general, remains Harvey Mansfield's *Statesmanship and Party Government* (University of Chicago). The superficiality of much of conservatism's devotion to Burke is apparent in its disregard of this profound study (Gertrude Himmelfarb is one of the few conservative scholars to have appreciated it). Burke's *Selected Letters* is not the best place to begin the study of his political philosophy—read his speeches and pamphlets—but it is invaluable for understanding Burke the political man, particularly in his relation to the birth of party government in Great Britain.

America's first and in some ways its greatest party politician was Thomas Jefferson. *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, the new anthology edited by Merrill D. Peterson for the Library of America, is a great repository of the man's soul, a sort of animate Jefferson Memorial. Not many conservatives today have kind words for Jefferson—the abstract principles of the Declaration of Independence are anathema to Burkeans, his egalitarianism is disliked by the die-hard partisans of the more aristocratic Federalists—and it may be that he only remains a hero for the libertarians. But even they distrust him for his support of civic virtue and agrarian republicanism. The fact is that none of these branches of present-day conservatism is really at home with the American political tradition. When conservatism seeks its principles and its tradition, it turns first not to the American past but to Burke, to the Anglican or the Catholic Church, to Herbert Spencer, to Austrian economists; or it tries to interpret the American past in the light of one of these (the list is by no means exhaustive) authorities. Paradoxically, American conservatism adopts Burke's great philosophy of practice not as a guide to practical politics but as an excuse for not being practically minded, while it leaves its successful political leaders (e.g., Reagan) to be guided by a makeshift Jeffersonianism to which it could never give its intellectual assent.

Needless to say, conservative politicians prefer to win rather than lose elections, and American elections cannot be won by espousing Burkean theories. They can be won on Jeffersonian grounds, and they usually are. Jefferson's victory in 1800, which he considered to be a revolution as great as that of 1776, marked not only the death knell of the Federalist party but also the emergence of Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans as the party of America's future. Ever since, politics in America has taken place within the horizon set by that party, as the names of the major parties of today show: The Democrats and Republicans are parts or wings of the original Democratic-Republican party. Thus Jefferson's primary institutional legacy to his country is its only Burkean "establishment," the practice of party government, although (if you are a Burkean, *because*) Jefferson did not intend to create a two-party system. He meant to absorb the Federalists within his own party, effectively obviating the need for permanent party competition; but he did not realize how many mansions there were in the house he was building.

American parties are not the same as Burke's parties, of course. Burke thought that parties should be led by landed gentlemen of the great aristocratic families, their ambition tempered by their inheritances, their principles supported by their friendships. In the United States, too, political parties have worked to limit and direct the ambitions of political men, but they have not been led by landed aristocrats (sometimes not even by gentlemen), and they have had the more democratic task of structuring popular participation in the government, to prevent the consent of the governed from degenerating into plebiscitarianism. To effect this, American citizens have been asked to consent in two different kinds of party contests: those that take place between a more or less established majority party (on the national level) and its minority opponent, and "critical elections" that determine which the majority party shall be. American elections thus exhibit a cycle consisting of a few critical elections separated by many non-critical or ordinary ones. Each of the critical elections since 1800 (by most counts, 1828, 1860, 1896, 1932) represents a kind of replay of the 1800 contest, which was itself a peaceful reenactment of the events of 1776. In short, critical or realigning elections are a return to America's origins for the sake of its ends. Burke opposed both notions, because looking at beginnings could overturn long-accepted customs and inheritances, and because searching for abstract principles would radicalize political life. Americans reject Burke's advice precisely in order to overturn laws and customs that contradict or dishonor the abstract principles that have ever been at the heart of our national life.

The pre-eminent event of 1776 was the decision for Independence, announced and justified in the great Declaration, which was principally Jefferson's handiwork. The argument that shines through the Declaration, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, his early pamphlet *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, is remarkably consistent. His book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, complicates and darkens his thought, but is hardly the congeries that some people believe. His letters are more daring, more idiosyncratic, more troublesome, but they are, after all, letters, and provide a wonderful record of the many-sidedness of Jefferson's genius. His notorious remark that "a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical," is, for example, a throw-away line in a letter to Madison, which cannot be easily squared with the stately doctrine of the people's right (and duty) of revolution in the Declaration. Making allowances for the private nature of most of his shocking pronouncements, Jefferson does not seem as undignified or as radical as some conservatives today think. But as the author of the Kentucky Resolutions, whose extreme states' rights arguments would be adopted and championed by the Confederacy, Jefferson was more irrespon-

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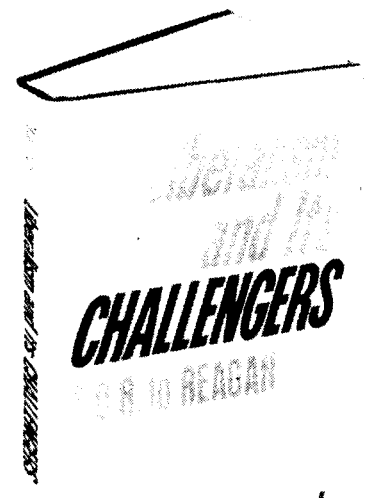

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sible than many conservatives would admit. In the same way, his patronage of agrarianism was turned by others, with an unbecoming ease, into a defense of the morality of slavery.

Yet it was the great truth at the heart of Jefferson's Declaration, "that all men are created equal," that provided the moral light by which both secession and slavery were seen to be evils and, through a long and bloody Civil War, came to be vanquished. To a great extent, every critical election in America, including the election of 1860 that precipitated the Civil War, revolves around which party will claim Jefferson as its own. The Democrats have appropriated him ever since the New Deal (it was the Roosevelt Administration that put Jefferson on the nickel and built the Jefferson Memorial). Whether Republicans will reassert their claim to embody his principles—as they did in 1860 and 1896—remains to be seen, though President Reagan is making efforts in that direction. In a 1925 book review in the *New York Evening World*, long before his triumphant election to the presidency, FDR wrote, "Hamiltons we have today. Is a Jefferson on the horizon?" Today, conservatives should be asking the same question—if they intend to govern the country, and not just to lament its decline. □

ALIEN POWERS: THE PURE THEORY OF IDEOLOGY

Kenneth Minogue/St. Martin's Press/$27.50

Maurice Cranston

Marx once said that the purpose of philosophy should be to transform the world rather than to interpret it. Ideology, which Professor Kenneth Minogue sets out to examine in his latest book, is just such a new-model "philosophy" which seeks to explain the world only in order to change it. Ideology has come in the twentieth century to play an increasingly powerful role in politics; and yet, as Minogue shows, it is essentially inimical to politics, and not least to democratic politics.

The word "ideology" may be said to be just about as old as the thing. It was first used as *idéologie* during the French Revolution, and it has never lost its association with the idea of revolution as such. Ideological thinking emerged at a time when religious thinking was losing, or had lost, its hold on many people's minds; and undoubtedly it owed its success to its ability to fill the emotional and intellectual void that the decline of religion had created. For although ideologists make great claims to be rational, and to have a "philosophy," ideology has far more features in common with religion, especially the more dogmatic religions of sectarian movements.

First, ideology suggests that modern man is alienated, that he is not living according to his own true nature even if he believes he is. Second, ideology asserts that the freedom provided by Western democracies is not true freedom. Third, ideology has an overall theory that explains human history and society. Fourth, ideology holds out a promise of redemption and a program of universal betterment. Fifth, ideology has a doctrine to explain why its critics resist its truths.

Where ideology differs from even the most heretical forms of religion is that it is entirely centered on this world and claims to depend entirely on reason, as opposed to faith or revelation. This is perhaps why it appeals to those many modern minds that since the eighteenth century have ceased to respond to the sacred and mystical ideas of the Christian tradition, and are able only to accept, or understand, theories which can be presented in rationalistic language.

Ideology, even for those French revolutionists who first introduced the word, was meant to be scientific. And Marx, the greatest and most thoroughgoing ideologist of modernity, liked to call his own ideology "scientific socialism." As Minogue reminds us, however, Marx did not like the word "ideology." It was a word he applied to his adversaries. When Marx called the theory of democratic freedom an "ideology," he designated it as a body of thought that masked the vested interest of the property-owning classes. He did not deny the sincerity of those bourgeois philosophers such as Locke who proclaimed a natural right to property; he only said that they deceived themselves into thinking that a policy to the private advantage of their class was in fact something of universal value. "Ideology" was another name for "false consciousness."

As Minogue points out, this particular pejorative use of the word "ideology" by a theorist who was, in the more generally accepted sense of the word, himself a classic case of the ideologist, has a paradoxical consequence: No one wants to be considered an ideologist. The people Minogue criticizes in these pages would not accept the appellation. They all want to be called "philosophers." And there are a great many readers—and teachers in universities—who are perfectly happy to speak, for example, of "Marxist philosophy."

Minogue shows us why neither Marx nor any other exponent of an ideology can properly be called a philosopher. For philosophy must begin, as Descartes said, with doubt. Marx begins with affirmation: Marxism "knows," and it brushes aside any criticism of its "knowledge" as irrational resistance to truth, prompted directly or indirectly by some vested interest which is challenged by that "knowledge." Hence the characteristic "philosophical" activity of Marxist reasoning is not analytical, critical, or speculative thinking, but "unmasking" or "demystifying" the beliefs of those who disagree with Marxism.

There is a great deal about Marxism in *Alien Powers*, but Minogue does not suggest that Marxism is the only important ideology—nationalism, feminism, indeed most "isms" that have become fashionable with the decline of religion in the modern world, have many of the characteristics by which Minogue identifies an ideology. Those "isms" are mainly political, but as Minogue points out in one of his most interesting chapters, ideology destroys politics. "Ideological politics," he writes, "is political activity going into liquidation."

Politics entails a continuous discussion of alternative policies so that decisions can be reached in the light of competing proposals; since ideology has a "scientific" program, a public debate is at best a time-wasting activity and at worst an impediment to progress. Hostile to all politics, ideology is especially hostile to democratic politics, since "it means that the ignorant, those suffering from false consciousness, may choose their rulers." Ideologists call for "mass participation," but what they want is mass assent, not the expression of people's own opinions.

"Ideology," writes Minogue, "is systematically destructive of political ideas and values because it represents the imperfections of the human condition as the necessary deficiencies of an oppressive system, judging everything in terms of a concealed absolute constructed from the human essence itself."

In this sentence, Minogue gives us a clue to the appeal of ideology. It is the appeal of the absolute. The void of modernity is disturbing for many people. The decline of religion has left

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them with nothing to be sure of: Without faith in God, and the unseen world, they feel ill at ease in the visible world, dismayed by the injustice and suffering they witness, bewildered by the seeming absurdity of life. Ideology puts an end to doubt—not, assuredly, by restoring genuine faith but by providing what it calls "knowledge," a systematic body of doctrine or dogma where everything is given a place.

Moreover, ideology, like the most authoritarian religions of the past, is attractive both to the most sophisticated and to the least sophisticated people. Minogue mentions first among the constituencies of ideology, the academic world, and second, the Third World. The charm of ideology for the intellectual is perhaps its total comprehensiveness; for the newly emancipated colonial people it is perhaps its indictment of oppression. "Ideology," says Minogue, "is the purest possible expression of European civilization's capacity for self-loathing."

The intellectual class can see a privileged place for itself in the ideological picture of the world. Indeed, one of the leading theorists of ideology in the present century, Karl Mannheim, argued that while the thinking of every other group and class in society was determined by its sociological condition, the "free floating intellectual" could rise above such enslavement to causality, and think autonomously. The intellectual class is thus promised something like the special position enjoyed by the clergy in medieval Christendom, when they were the only men who had any education and on the strength of that could direct the minds of everyone else.

The reason for the attractions of ideology to the Third World mind is less obvious, especially since the particular ideology most popular with that public is Marxism. Marx himself had no sympathy for the nationalist aspirations of the backward subjects of Western empires: On the contrary, he favored the enlargement of empires as a progressive force to take those societies out of feudalism into bourgeois capitalism and so onwards to socialism. It was Lenin who introduced the anti-imperialist element into his Marxism, promising what Marx had considered historically impossible, an immediate passage from imperialist domination to socialist liberation.

Ideology simplifies things at the same time as it constructs its elaborate theoretical edifices; if it is philosophy, it is philosophy for the masses at the same time as it is philosophy for the rootless, rebellious intellectual class in whom our culture's "self-loathing" is most pronounced.

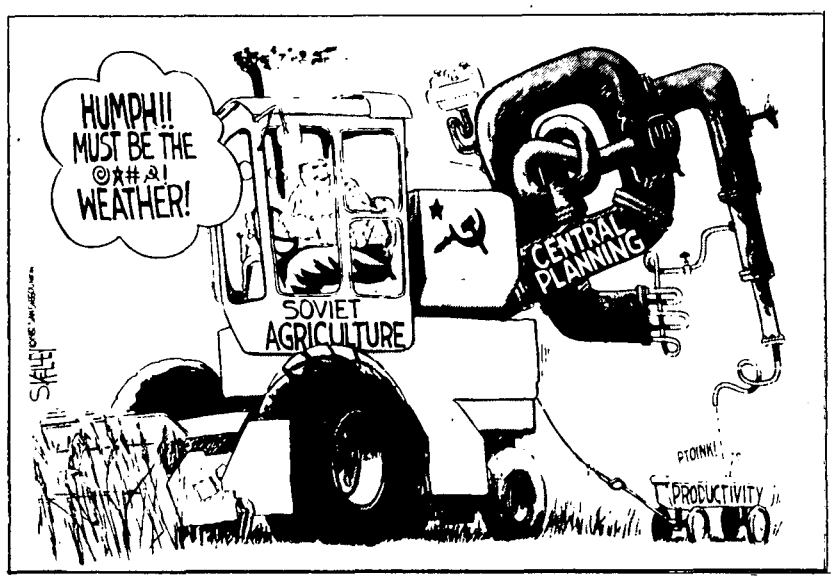
Some thirty years ago, several leading American—and French—sociologists predicted the end of ideology, suggesting that the pragmatic approach might be expected to govern both national and intellectual politics in the coming years. Up to a point they were right, and if Minogue is correct there was no way politics could remain politics if ideology was allowed to triumph. But where those sociologists were wrong was in foreseeing a decline in the threat of ideology—a threat to politics itself as well as to freedom.

Ideological thinking is widespread, not to say rampant, in certain international institutions, in UNESCO, for example, and some other U.N. bodies as well; in large areas of the media and the educational establishment; in the governments and anti-government movements of most Third World countries; ideology is responsible for the fratricidal civil wars in Cambodia and Lebanon, and the scandalous failure of African regimes to face the practical problems posed by drought. In a word, the present-day consequences of ideology are literally murderous.

It is arguable that the regimes least responsive to ideology in deciding their own actions are those that have done most to export ideology and promote

WEATHER OR NOT?

Russia was once known as the "breadbasket of Europe" due to the bountiful harvests of its fertile Ukraine region. Since the Revolution and the collectivization of the farms, however, agricultural output has been notoriously low. This socialist paradise can no longer feed its own people, and must rely heavily on farmers in free nations like the United States to stave off famine.



Not surprisingly, the Soviet government attributes this dismal performance, not to socialist mismanagement, but to over sixty-five consecutive years of "bad weather." Curiously, there is one sector of Soviet agriculture which has fared well despite bad weather. It is the so-called "private sector."

The private sector consists of one-acre plots of land which farming households are allowed to cultivate in their spare time either for their own consumption or for sale. They are also allowed to have a cow, two pigs, and as many chickens as they want.

In all, these plots account for only about three percent of the total farmland in the Soviet Union. Yet this private sector provides about thirty-three percent of total agricultural output. Specifically, it contributes 65% of that country's potatoes, 40% of its vegetables, 35% of its milk and meat, and 50% of its eggs.

On average, about 44% of the cash and in-kind income of collective farm families is derived from private household plots. This explains why the Kremlin tolerates the private sector. As bad as their agricultural situation is, it would be much worse in the absence of these little oases.

So, despite socialist rhetoric to the contrary, even the Soviet Union must grudgingly concede the amazing productive power of workers left free to make their own choices and to keep or sell what they produce.

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it to other parts of the world, the Soviet Union and China. The study of Marx's theories would be the worst possible guide as to what to expect from Moscow or Peking. In both capitals, the pragmatic pursuit of self-interest is the first principle of government and foreign policy. Ideology provides the wrapping and the rhetoric; no Russian or Chinese leader will feel he could afford the luxury of actually believing it, or rather, one should say, believing *in* it, for ideology is something you believe in, subscribe to, commit yourself to, rather than merely believe. The end-of-ideology sociologists were correct again, to the extent that at the highest level of policy-making, the Communist leadership is no longer (as it was still perhaps in Lenin's time) guided by ideology. It is their followers and apologists who engage in ideological thought.

Professor Minogue ends his book with a plea for scholarship. He defends himself against the charge that any critic of ideology is himself an ideologist; for it is one of the favorite ploys of ideology to argue that no one can be neutral, that all who are not friends are enemies. He shows that ploy to be sheer sophistry. It is perfectly reasonable to adopt an attitude of indifference or impartiality towards any question; and indeed it is part of the moral duty of the genuine judge to uphold the standard of impartiality.

Of course, the exponents of ideology will not accept Minogue's plea. They will call him an ideologue of the status quo, a reactionary. But the ordinary reader will recognize the author of this important book as a very fair as well as eloquent and witty champion of common sense against bogus metaphysics, of democracy against the regimentation of thought, and of the spirit of inquiry against the tyranny of dogma. □

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ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL
Mark Shields/Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill/$5.95, paper

Fred Barnes

Some of you out there may not know Mark Shields. So let me introduce him. He is a former political strategist for Democratic candidates, liberals even. Remember President Udall? Shields had the job of getting him to the White House. Like Udall, some of his candidates did very poorly. The last Shields campaign I recall was the gubernatorial primary in Louisiana in 1979. Shields's candidate, Bubba Henry, was the class of the field. He came in fifth. *C'est la vie.*

I'm being unfair to Shields, of course. Often the best political work is done by the agents of losing candidates—the TV spots produced by Gerald Rafshoon for Jimmy Carter in 1980, the strategic advice offered Ronald Reagan by John Sears in 1976, and so on. Anyway, in Shields's case, political journalism has gained what political campaigning has lost. Be thankful.

Shields, who writes a column for the *Washington Post* and commentaries for Mutual Radio and CBS, is the wittiest political analyst around, and he is frequently the most trenchant, fair-minded, and thoughtful. All of which explains why his slim (108 pages) volume of commentaries from last year's presidential campaign is so readable and fascinating. The campaign itself was rather lacking in dramatic tension. After all, was there ever really a chance that Ronald Reagan might lose? No, but still Shields brings the race to magnificent light. Other, longer books will soon appear to illuminate the campaign, but I doubt if they'll be more compelling than Shields's.

What's so hot about his book? Well, for one thing, Shields explains better than anyone else what's wrong with the Democrats. Sure, they're too liberal for a conservative age. We all know that. But the real problem they have, he says, is that they don't think they're doing anything wrong. "Confronted with the bad news that their presidential ticket won only three out of ten white male votes [on election day], they find no fault with their ideas or themselves," Shields writes. "Instead they exhibit a marked preference for blaming the results on terminal macho-ness in the population, or racial polarization. As an explanation or excuse, that may be convenient, but it is wrong."

Democrats have lost four of the last five presidential races "not because the electorate is mean-spirited and vengeful," he says, but because what Democrats stood for wasn't "relevant, believable or practical to a majority of American voters. Candidates who blame their problems on the intellectual or moral shortcomings of the voters deserve defeat. And usually they get what they deserve." Nor should Walter Mondale or his staff or his stiff stump style be tagged as the cause of the 1984 Democratic defeat. "At some point, Democrats will be forced to conclude that as Pogo once put it, 'We have met the enemy and it's us.' "

Not that Shields absolves Mondale entirely. "Throughout, Mondale never

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appeared to be the sort of strong, decisive leader who could, if necessary, benchpress NATO," he writes. And while he admires Mondale's performance in the first presidential debate with Reagan last year, Shields says that his comment about liking the President personally "should have made Mondale's nose grow three inches." And Mondale missed the boat on the issues he stressed. He kept saying Americans wanted an "engaged" President, not a "detached" one. "Here Mondale could be making a mistake common to Washington where people frequently confuse input (that's hours spent) with output (results obtained)," Shields writes. "As President, Mondale's old boss [Carter], with his eighteen-hour days, gave hard work a bad name."

Besides, folks like Reagan's easygoing approach to the presidency. In a terrific column a few years ago (but not included in this book), Shields wrote that Reagan, by being a successful President, was wiping out scores of college seminars on "The Troubled Presidency," "The President: Can He Govern?" "The Shackles of Power," etc. "Reagan is probably the best-liked American President in at least twenty years," Shields writes here. "One reason is that Ronald Reagan is a man publicly free of self-pity; he doesn't spend time telling us what a tough, thankless job he has and how lonely and burdensome are the duties of the chief executive."

A Democrat who gives nongrudging respect to Reagan? Shields goes further. Unlike nearly every other political writer around, including me, Shields liked the "morning in America" ads for the Reagan campaign (you know, the ones similar to McDonald's ads). "To watch the spots is to conclude that Ronald Reagan is running for head of the nation that is the United States, while his Democratic rivals, to listen to them, are running for the position of head of the United States government," he writes. "There is a profound difference."

I'll say there is. Shields also rejects the idea that TV has ruined campaigns. "On balance, television has made our presidential campaigns more honest and our candidates more accountable," he argues. No more saying one thing in Michigan and another in Alabama, because "television can expose trimming and position-altering by a candidate far more devastatingly than any other medium."

Oh, yes. Shields reveals a few press secrets, too. What are the words that political reporters hate the most? If you think they are "cash bar" or "I'm sorry, but there's no prepared text—you'll have to take notes," you're close, but wrong. Reporters like to be thought of as tough-minded, and they fear having their questions brushed aside by a candidate or his aides as too academic or abstract. Writes Shields: "Such advisers, when they do not wish to discuss a subject, use the ultimate weapon of ridicule to silence the insecure reporter: 'That's an inside-the-Beltway story.'" The beltway here is the one around Washington, and most national political reporters live inside it. "If a story is 'inside the Beltway,' it has nothing to do with the real world where people know the price of hamburger and Joe Lunchbucket stops after work for a shot and a beer," says Shields. And when a campaign aide delivers this judgment, he often does it, Shields notes, "with an air of disappointment that seems to say: 'And all the time I thought you were a tough-minded and realistic pol.'" The effect is withering.

Come to think of it, we can all learn something from Shields's revelation. The next time somebody approaches you with a report from Sam Donaldson that Reagan has been shut off from the outside world by Patrick J. Buchanan or one from Anthony Lewis that Reagan really supports apartheid in South Africa, just dismiss the thing with, "You take that seriously? That's just that inside-the-Beltway stuff." Not only might it work, but you might be right. □

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PLAUSIBLE PREJUDICES: ESSAYS ON AMERICAN WRITING

Joseph Epstein/W.W. Norton/$17.95

George Sim Johnston

Viewing the overproduction of books and pamphlets in his own day, Samuel Johnson complained of "an epidemical conspiracy for the destruction of paper." Joseph Epstein, who as a critic has much in common with the man who told Boswell to "clear your mind of cant," feels the same way about the volume of literary criticism today. Fortunately, however, for those who care about the quality of our literary culture, Mr. Epstein has not abstained from swelling the torrent of critical prose. *Plausible Prejudices* is a collection of his occasional literary writings, most of which first appeared in the *New Criterion* and *Commentary*. But the word "occasional" hardly does justice to the sort of reviews and essays that Mr. Epstein writes. Like any first-rate critic, he has a larger purpose than simply turning over the book at hand. Even when he reviews a dim novel by Philip Roth or John Irving, we get a charming and perspicacious discussion of the novelist's *oeuvre* and the cultural issues that it raises. Epstein's charm, however, does not belie the severity of his views about contemporary literature. "My case," he writes, "is that literature is going through a very bad patch at present—that there is something second-rate about it, especially in America, though not here alone." Mr. Epstein, of course, is not the only critic to be embarrassed by what passes these days for serious writing. But I don't know of any other writer who can explain with such lucidity why our cultural life has come to such a pass.

Epstein is a man with an argument, and the point he drives home again and again is that much of our literature has been reduced to a flea market of received ideas. He blames this on the intrusion of politics, not specifically the electoral kind, but any scheme of ideas—Marxism, feminism, Freudian psychology—which tries to reduce human reality to simple formulas. His protest against the effect that ideology has had on the literary imagination reminds me of Evelyn Waugh's description of Mexico in the late thirties: "Politics, everywhere destructive, have here dried up the place, frozen it, cracked it, and powdered it to dust. In the sixteenth century human life was disordered and talent stultified by the obsession of theology; today we are plague stricken by politics."

When you sit down to read a contemporary novel, Epstein points out, too often you have to agree with the politics of the author in order to enjoy the book. This is not true of the great novelists of the past; it is not necessary to subscribe to the virulent opinions of Dostoyevsky or Malraux in order to enjoy *The Possessed* or *Man's Fate*. When these men picked up a pen, they were artists first and pamphleteers second. But contemporary novelists do not seem able to transcend ideology when they turn on their word processors; you have to buy the clichés of people like Doctorow, Heller, Beattie, Coover, and Stone if you are going to find moral refreshment in their books. To read Ann Beattie at any great length, for example, you have to agree with her that people who went to college in the sixties and still get stoned while listening to Dylan records are vastly superior to the middle class swine around them. Or to read Doctorow, you have to view American capitalism as essentially exploitative and repressive.

Lionel Trilling, in a famous phrase, talked about the "bloody crossroads where politics and literature meet." Epstein—quite against his will, it seems to me—stands at those crossroads and says with a shrug "Well, a man is entitled to his opinions." Epstein is a conservative, but he does not judge a writer by his politics; he prefers, for example, the work of the early left-wing Dos Passos to that of the right-wing Dos Passos; but he rightly condemns any writer who cannot free himself of ideology. He is concerned with politics only to the extent that they trivialize a writer's work. This being the case, I find the following complaint by William Pritchard, in his review of this book in the *New York Times Book Review*, hard to fathom: "Mr. Epstein may be less than candid in not calling attention to the less-than-disinterested nature of his own critical operation. He deplores the politicizing of literature, yet the bulk of these essays were published in *Commentary* and the *New Criterion*, journals, it is fair to say, of the political and cultural right. . . . There is a certain amount of headhunting going on."

Professor Pritchard fails to make a distinction between leftists who happen to be critics, and a critic who happens to be a conservative. In the first category are writers like Malcolm Cowley and Dwight Macdonald, whose literary judgments are often vitiated by political motives. Their politics—which, in Cowley's case, involved at one time the most embarrassing infatuation with Stalinism—are stamped like a watermark on every page they wrote. This is not true of Epstein, who simply objects to the invasion of a writer's imagination by politics of any kind. I don't believe we would hear from him on the subject if the other side kept its politics to itself. I imagine that he feels like the narrator of a recent novel by Alasdair Gray: "I am very sorry. . . . I would like to ignore politics but POLITICS WILL NOT LET ME ALONE." It is the left, not the right, which has politicized our culture, and you cannot fault a critic—one who is not peddling a program and simply wants to enjoy a book for its own sake—for trying to clear the air of political fumes. And, contrary to the implication of Pritchard's remarks, Epstein always makes full disclosure of his political opinions.

Next to politics, in Epstein's view, the university earns the largest share of blame for the decline of American letters. "The principal, the major, the overriding and overwhelming fact about American writing between the end of World War II and the present," he writes, "is its nearly complete absorption by American universities." Most American writers, he points out, now live in universities. "Where once a young novelist might have learned about life working on a newspaper—as did Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway—he is now more likely to learn about it through a creative-writing program." As a result, much of our fiction is "not really intended for use outside of an English department." In addition to holding our novelists and poets like Indians on a reservation, the academy has diminished the appreciation of literature by its total surrender to political fashion. Writers are often taught, not for their intrinsic merits, but because they are feminist or black or possess other extra-literary qualities. As a result, we have had the gross inflation of the reputation of a writer like Virginia Woolf (feminist and suffering lesbian) and the undervaluation of a writer like Willa Cather, whose views are deemed not sufficiently feminist—although, Epstein notes, recent biographical speculation has cleared a place for Cather as an "honorary lesbian." Reverse cultural discrimination has spread to every organ of literary culture, be it prize committees or Sunday book supplements, and, as a result, says Epstein, our culture has come "to look a little like the Democratic Party under George McGovern."

Other items on Epstein's list of baleful influences are the "normalization of alienation"(a.k.a., the Void)—which, he argues, is based on a selective understanding of modernism—and the decline of places like New York and Chicago as centers of literary culture. He might also have pointed out that those American novelists who have not left the city for the university have left it for the sticks. The Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa recently wondered in an interview why so many American novelists live in the country; and, indeed, it would be difficult to imagine Balzac or Thackeray moving to Cornish, New Hampshire. Perhaps one of the reasons for the strength of the novel in South America just now is that novelists like Vargas Llosa, Garcia Marquez, and Carlos Fuentes spend most of their time in town.

Epstein's main concern is with the novel; a large section of *Plausible Prejudices* comprises reviews of living novelists, and Epstein's discussions are both comprehensive and just. His essay on Garcia Marquez is far and away the best treatment I have read of that Colombian artificer. Epstein is fully appreciative of Marquez's great gifts, but he is also the only critic I know to put his finger on the flaw that keeps Marquez out of the big leagues: " . . . Oddly, in Garcia Marquez's fiction morality is never an issue; Garcia Marquez himself seems little interested in moral questions, or in the conflicts, gradations, and agonies of moral turmoil. The reason for this, I suspect, is that for him the moral universe is already set—for him, as for so many revolutionary intellectuals, there are the moral grievances of the past, the moral hypocrisies of the present, and, waiting over the horizon, the glories of the future, when moral complexity will be abolished." Politics, again, has done its corrosive work.

I do have some complaints about this part of the book. Epstein's reaction to a writer like Updike could be more modulated. True, Updike has never come close to writing an important novel, but he has produced some wonderful short stories and essays, including one of the best pieces ever writ-

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George Sim Johnston is a writer living in New York.

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ten about baseball, "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu." Also, the group of novelists to whom Epstein gives extended treatment is somehow selective. They are all writers who have in some way misused their gifts and thus illustrate Epstein's "case." Where are I.B. Singer, Eudora Welty, J.F. Powers, Milan Kundera, Saul Bellow, and V.S. Naipaul? How about a younger writer like Mark Helprin? He alludes favorably to some of these writers in passing, but I think a full discussion of one or two of them would have made the collection more rounded.

Then, there is another kind of omission in Mr. Epstein's dealings with the novel. His approach to literature is essentially Augustan—meaning that he looks primarily for moral seriousness and intellectual gravity in a work of art—and this is fine so far as it goes, particularly given the antinomian strain in much contemporary writing. But it does have its limitations when it comes to writing about the novel. There is a line (to borrow F.R. Leavis's favorite word) in the history of the form which runs from *Tristram Shandy* through *At Swim-Two-Birds* and the novels of Ronald Firbank; it is full of freaks and gargoyles and is utterly lacking in seriousness; its practitioners approach the novel as a sport, not as moral gymnastics. Augustan strictures do not suffice when dealing with this kind of work. "Nothing odd will do long. *Tristram Shandy* did not last," Johnson remarked to Boswell. But it did last, and I see no evidence in Epstein's writing of an allowance for this element of play in the novel. What does he make of Thomas McGuane's *The Bushwacked Piano* or Donald Barthelme's short stories? There is little gravity in these works—but we do not wish them other than they are. And what about less-than-major writers who fully realize their gifts within strict, self-imposed limits? It seems to me that there is a distinction to be made between "minor" and "second-rate" when discussing the novel, and that Epstein does not make it.

This is but a cavil. I have not touched on half of Joseph Epstein's virtues as a critic and essayist. He complains in one essay that of the three hundred odd reviews his books have received, none contained any constructive criticism, so I am trying to oblige. His books are a pleasure to read, and now that he has flung his literary criticism between hard covers, readers of the contemporary novel have a place to go for intelligent talk about the boys and girls (as Epstein calls them), as well as the few grownups, who now write American fiction. □

SEE YOU LATER ALLIGATOR

William F. Buckley, Jr./Doubleday/$15.95

Cynthia Grenier

Who would have thought that Che Guevara would steal the show from William F. Buckley, Jr.'s nominal hero, Blackford Oakes, in his latest round of adventures? Mind you, Buckley has always enjoyed dropping famous folk from recent history into his espionage entertainments—as witness his witty and irreverent incursions into the mind of President Kennedy in *The Death of Henri Tod*—but this is perhaps the first time that Buckley has created a character who, while faithful to the essence of the historical counterpart, is eminently worthy of a serious novel.

See You Later Alligator begins with history: In 1961, presidential speechwriter Richard Goodwin and Cuba's then-Minister of Industries Guevara met at the Punte del Este economic conference and talked until dawn. Goodwin reported back to the President, handing over a box of Monte Cristo cigars as a gift from Guevara, and some years later wrote up the encounter in the *New Yorker*.

With these events as his launching pad, Buckley lifts off into a nifty what-if: What if Kennedy had wanted to follow up on the Goodwin-Guevara meeting? Wouldn't it be reasonable to call upon a trusted CIA agent and dispatch him to Cuba . . . and next thing we know, Blackford Oakes is in orbit, headed for Havana, Guevara, and the Cuban missile crisis.

Guevara dominates the book from his first lines on page three (a quote from Goodwin's account): "I want to thank you for invading our country. It has made a great power of us and eliminated all resistance to Castro." Buckley's Guevara is independent of spirit, loyal to his beliefs, stingingly honest, ironic, intellectual, stoic, and withal charming. Blackford Oakes, on the other hand, has the thankless role of playing straight man to Commandante Guevara—until he discovers the secret of the missiles, whereupon Buckley takes the reader for a hang-onto-your-seats land and sea getaway.

In addition to Guevara, Buckley produces some other wickedly observed portraits: Fidel, *el maximo lider* himself, charismatic and quixotic; his rather nasty brother Raul; and a genial, vulgar, wily Khrushchev ("Does *Izvestiya* have to be boring?" he asks his editor-in-chief son-in-law, and then answers his own question: "I suppose so, otherwise I would send you to the Gulag"). And we are again let in on the thoughts of Jack Kennedy ("*Ministros del Economicas*—not bad, Jack; it

Cynthia Grenier, formerly with the New York Times, *is a movie producer.*

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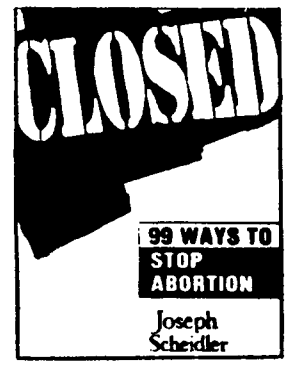

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wasn't you who had trouble with Spanish at Harvard"). Buckley also recalls the near-perfect blindness of the American newspapers of the day, with Walter Lippmann assuring his readers: "The present Cuban military buildup is not capable of offensive action"—this, when the Soviets had already installed their missiles in Cuba.

It is much to Buckley's credit that he convincingly re-creates the very real fear and urgency of those few days after the missiles were discovered, when the whole world held its breath. And with Central America in the forefront of the news and Fidel Castro still playing his same game twenty years later, we should be grateful that Buckley has chosen to bring this apposite history once again to our attention.

There is a good reason why Buckley does such a bang-up job rendering not only the inside of the missile crisis but the character of Guevara as well. Among the twenty-two people whose assistance with the book Buckley acknowledges is Carlos Franqui, a former intimate of Castro and Guevara who wrote the classic *Diary of the Cuban Revolution, 1952-1959* and more recently *Family Portrait with Fidel* (which I reviewed in the July 1984 issue of *TAS*). In the latter book Franqui describes a Guevara disillusioned by Soviet socialism and attracted to Mao's Communism. (Guevara, of course, was to die in Bolivia when the Cultural Revolution was just getting underway—had he lived he might well have been in for some more disillusionment.) In addition to the formal acknowledgement, Buckley slips into the text of the novel a graceful tribute to Franqui's "jaunty, exuberant" editing of the newspaper *Revolución*.

But since this is Buckley's most serious and accomplished novel, I feel emboldened to register one small complaint: Why is it that our enemy (for despite all his complexity and charm, Guevara was after all the man who uttered the cry still echoing throughout Latin America: "One, two, three Vietnams!") should be relaxing with the high culture—Alfred North Whitehead, a biography of Stendahl, the poems of Garcia Lorca—while Blackford Oakes, champion of the Christian West, spends all his spare time reading Agatha Christie? There is nothing incongruous in a man of action with intellectual tastes, as Buckley, an exemplar of that sort of man if there ever was one, must surely know. Between the Cuban missile crisis and the present, there is no shortage of material for further Oakes adventures, so we can hope that Buckley upgrades his hero's reading by the time the Six Day War or the Czech invasion come along. □

FAMOUS FINANCIAL FIASCOS

John Train/Clarkson N. Potter-Crown/$8.95

Aram Bakshian, Jr.

As that great and good student of human nature, W.C. Fields, so often reminded us, "You can't cheat an honest man." Only people with flawed intellectual or moral integrity fall ready, self-made victims to get-rich-quick schemes of the sort described in John Train's amusing and gracefully written little compendium of con games.

The symbiotic relationship between the quack and the zealot eager to embrace a crank theory, or the charlatan and the speculator (more greedy than gullible), is as old as the human race. The pyramid scheme has been around a lot longer than the pyramids. Nowhere is the ancient principle of supply and demand better illustrated than in the ritual by-play between hick and huckster. When the interchange is on a modest or individual scale, the crime is victimless, with the smarter of two cheats coming out on top. But when, as in several cases recounted by Mr. Train, the scam is pitched to a central state authority, whole societies can be convulsed, the innocent suffering along with the guilty.

Thus, while a totally dishonest sharper like Bernie Cornfeld could only victimize individual investors stupid enough to swallow his transparently false sales pitch, Regency France could be brought to its economic knees when John Law, an émigré Scots financier, sincerely convinced the Duc d'Orléans to float the inflationary schemes of the Banque Générale.

Hence the two great lessons of Mr. Train's book: First, when unslakeable greed and invincible ignorance combine, fiasco follows; and second, the greater the involvement of the state (or influential interest groups capable of determining state policy, as in the case of Ferdinand de Lesseps' catastrophic Panama Canal company), the greater the potential damage the fiasco may inflict on innocent bystanders.

Besides entertaining us with his accounts of twenty historic cons ranging from the South Sea Bubble and seventeenth-century Dutch Tulipomania to the more recent depredations of Ivar Krueger (the Swedish Match King) and the unsavory Spanish tycoon, Juan March, Mr. Train draws a useful conclusion:

> When large matters go awry, they often follow standard patterns. So perhaps this volume, like a birdwatcher's handbook, will help the reader identify some of the familiar ones—groupthink, hubris-nemesis, the Ponzi scheme, speculative manias, the "distance lends enchantment" mirage and other raptures—as they occur, alone and in combination.

Groupthink, claims Mr. Train, rules the stock market and other speculative enthusiasms because "people will go along with an authoritative leader's crazy decision even though they half-know that they are being led to perdition. They become sleepwalkers." Great is the danger of the glib pitchman with a "convincing, but wrong, idea," because "exciting buzzwords and clever slogans often transmit fallacies, since mankind craves simple solutions to complicated problems." Communism being, needless to say, a classic case of the spurious, pseudo-scientific panacea to social and economic problems.

The hubris-nemesis syndrome, which recurs again and again in both finance and politics, may involve an initially honest, even able, leader who is driven over the judgmental edge by early successes. The illusion of invincibility leads inevitably to disaster ("It is astonishing," Mr. Train quotes Maynard Keynes as saying, "what foolish things one can temporarily believe if one thinks too long alone").

The Ponzi scheme phenomenon is as old as the hills and still drags people in by "paying off the earlier participants in a bubble with the money of the later ones. Americans encounter it regularly in pyramid clubs and door-to-door-selling organizations of the 'Dare to Be Great' variety, in which your payoff comes from recruiting salesmen, who are supposed to recruit still more salesmen, and so on ad infinitum. Something always comes along to break the flow of endless buildup. . . . " Often at play here is what Mr. Train calls the "bigger fool" theory, under which the investor willingly pays more than the real value for shares or merchandise on the assumption that someone even dumber is out there waiting to buy the stuff at an even more grotesque markup.

All so amusing . . . and all so sad. People simply will not learn. It really does seem as if certain vices and certain virtues are ingrained in the race, the good to be encouraged, the bad to be discouraged; so simple a task, and yet so endless.

If Mr. Train has any moral at all to adorn his tale, it is not his own, but that of a rather bright Swedish cabinet minister, Alex Oxenstierna, who put in his best years under Gustavus Adolphus and his semi-daughter, Christina: *"Semper vult mundus decipi: decipietur"* ("The world always wishes to be deceived; let it be deceived").

All this is to Mr. Train's credit. If he does occasionally err on the details—which he does— it is in trivial degrees, as when, in referring to the Crimean War, he writes that "dysentery killed far more British soldiers than the Turks did. . . . " One should hope so, Mr. Train, since the Turks were allied with the British against the Russians. But, then again, the whole point of *Famous Financial Fiascos* is that ignorance is invincible. How appropriate. □

Aram Bakshian, Jr. writes frequently on history, humor, and the arts. A former aide to three Presidents, his latest book, Winning the White House, *was published last September in England.*

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IMPLANTATIONS

by Mary Ball Martínez

The Guatemalan Army of the Poor, known as the EGP and now happily extinct, was the invention of university-educated young men from well-off families. It was conceived not in the city slums or dusty villages of the home country, but in the bars and cafés of Mexico City. It was a project the planners referred to unblushingly as an "implantation." Like an artificial heart, it was to be grafted onto the living flesh of the self-contained society that makes up the Indian half of the Guatemalan people, an operation the educated young men were convinced would do the Indians good.

If, at the beginning of 1972 when the EGP was launched, no interest in rebellion was evident in any sector of Guatemala's highland regions, interest would have to be aroused. If the poor—in this case illiterate farmers—were unaware of what hurt them, the educated young men would be there to tell them. This proposal of revolution from above was virtually the same as that which would emerge a few years later in the final sessions of CELAM, the Latin American Episcopal Conference. When Pope John Paul opened the proceedings in Puebla, Mexico by declaring that priests should stay clear of political action, the bishops were quick to agree. After all, a gun-toting priest was often killed before he could pull the trigger, as in the sad case of Camilo Torres of Colombia. The role of the priest, in what the bishops considered to be an urgently needed transformation of the social order, must be limited, therefore, to arousing the faithful, showing them how they were being exploited, and letting them take it from there. Put into practice this thesis spread bloodshed and chaos over much of Latin America.

Before the liberating theologists could move in, however, ground had to be broken by professional revolutionaries, the college-bred terrorists. One of their number, Mario Payeras, a founder of the EGP, has given a lucid account of the process in a little book of memoirs called *Los Dias de la Selva* ("Jungle Days"). I was told about the book by Col. René Carballo, commandante of Guatemala's 14th Military Zone at Solola. "You won't find it for sale here," he said. "In Mexico, yes. It tells the real story of how the subversion began in the northwest. I know, I was stationed there all during the 1970s." I finally found it at a leftist bookseller's near the National University of Mexico. Printed in Cuba in 1980, and far from being a political tract, *Los Dias de la Selva* is written with sensitivity and care for detail.

The account begins in January 1972, with the author and fourteen companions slipping into Guatemala from Mexico by night. Although their field of operations would be the mountains of Huehuetenango, for greater safety they came in through lowland jungle farther north. Penetrating only far enough to be out of range of border patrols, they cleared ground for a small base, storing a modest supply of food and ammunition, cooking by campfire, and listening to radio news from nearby countries. Payeras calls the little camp "an implantation, the culmination of several years of feverish preparation abroad."

The men were acutely aware they had not a single contact in Guatemala, and they remembered the warning of Mao Tse-tung: The guerrilla without peasant support is like a fish without water. "Our thoughts went back to the defeat and death of Che Guevara in Bolivia where the lone, hunted guerrilla fighter lacked any base among the peasantry." Attempts to implant socialism in eastern Guatemala nearly a decade earlier had come to nothing because no support could be found among the people. This time around the guerrillas were determined to give absolute priority to gaining the sympathy of the indigenous farmers of the western mountains.

By day they hunted pheasant and armadillo, taking frequent hikes into the steaming jungle in the hope of finding habitations. But their only brush with human beings came when two hunters passed their camp. When the strangers asked too many questions, the guerrilla band decided it was time to move on. First, however, they felt they should alert their "cell" back in Mexico City with a terrorist act that would reach the media. Accordingly, they crept back to the frontier under cover of darkness and seized a small airfield belonging to the Mexican border patrol. After setting fire to the two miniature planes and raiding the food and ammunition stores they loaded their booty onto two police launches and set off up the Lacantún River. (Payeras makes no mention of the fate of the border guards, who must have been overcome as they slept.)

Upriver by morning they could hear the din of both Mexican and Guatemalan search planes overhead. They disembarked and set off into the jungle to begin what the author calls "the most terrible days" of marching from dawn to dusk, weighted down with provisions, bathed in sweat, and tortured by insects. Their passage through the tangled growth was very slow since they dared not hack their way and leave a swath visible from the air. At times they slogged through swamps up to their thighs. Payeras notes that if any of them had dared at that point to mention taking power and creating a new society, he would have been shouted down with obscenities. Except for two Indian boys, who, the author says, "never understood why we were going through all this," the guerrillas were city-bred, unused to physical hardships.

Food supplies were exhausted when the band finally reached a settlement. To their consternation, "the villagers fled into the jungle as soon as they became aware of our presence. We tried to call them, then to run after them and catch them, but soon we found ourselves standing all alone in the middle of the only street." One old man, too weak to flee, told them the name of the place was Rubelolom. To their requests for rice, beans, salt, sugar, he would only repeat, "*macá, macá.*" They knew it was the Mayan word for "there isn't any," but, Payeras says, "it meant a much more terrible thing to us. It meant utter rejection by those people we had come to teach." (That the hungry men raided the abandoned huts must be taken for granted.)

Finally reaching higher, cooler country they came on an occasional ranch or small village. Invariably greeted with "*macá*" they regularly seized food at gunpoint. Payeras, understandably, does not state the fact, but farmers in Huehuetenango will tell you that is what happened. In the high mountain village of San Mateo Ixtatan the parish priest, a Maryknoll from Idaho, told me the mayor was suspended by his jawbone for four hours until he agreed to order the villagers to work for the rebels and feed them.

Around campfires at night the fifteen continued to thrash out the baffling problem of *macá.* They could obtain food and even labor by force but not cooperation. "No one would tell us where the paths led, where other villages were. What were they afraid of? Above all, why were they indifferent to our message? Months came and went, but we could find no way to penetrate the consciousness of these people."

Soul searching of this kind discouraged the two Indian youths. One slipped away in the night. When the other asked to be allowed to return to his family, the group became alarmed. What would he tell about them? A kind of trial was held and, Payeras says, "reluctantly, a death sentence was passed. There was no other way. We had to shoot him and we did it in the forest on a summer morning when all the birds were singing. When it was over we were surprised to feel a sense of having matured. We were better warriors now."

But as yet there was no war. Other clandestine groups had entered the country, they knew, but there was no encouraging news from any part of Guatemala. Several Communist cells in the capital had not prospered, and in the rich plantations along the coast workers remained indifferent. Payeras thought he knew the reason: "An organization created for war does not prosper in peace." Action was needed.

Not until the spring of 1975, however, when another small band filtered in from Mexico to augment the ranks of Payeras's group, did they agree on what action to take. The formula was simple: To arouse the people they

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Mary Ball Martínez reports frequently from Latin America for The American Spectator.

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must provoke the army. They decided on a program of terror and targeted the first victim, one Luis Arenas, a notably unpopular coffee grower living three days' march from their base. The guerrillas persuaded some thirty Indian youths to join them in this "mission to punish Arenas in the name of social justice."

Once underway, "complaints over the petty discomforts of the march showed how poor a commitment the boys had to our cause and by the third day, when water ran low, they were completely demoralized. We knew it was useless to try to hold them; we let them go." The remaining men went on to the *finca* where they found Arenas handing out wages to several dozen farm hands. Mingling with the crowd, one of the intruders moved close and shot him dead.

The workers stood stock still, dumbfounded. Then they heard the voice of one of the terrorists in what passed for their own Indian dialect, shouting that the poor were avenged, that justice had been done, that a new life was beginning for all. As the speaker's eloquence mounted, the workers' state of shock gradually turned into hysterical cheers. Payeras records these "*vivas!*" as the moment the War of the People began, the hour the Army of the Poor was born. He also notes that by the time army parachutists combed the area, rounding up suspects, he and his little band were far away.

The account ends in late 1976, by which time repeated terrorist provocation followed by repeated army reaction had thrown Guatemala into a state of war. At last the peasants had become involved. That it happened not through their own rebellion but through imposition of violence they could not control no one knows better than Mario Payeras. His *Dias de la Selva* bears out everything the Indian families of Huehuetenango and El Quiché told me when I spent a month among them last summer.

It had taken three years for the implant called the EGP to begin to function. The next two years carried it to near triumph; two more wiped it out. At about the time of the Arenas murder, arms began to come into the country from Cuba through Mexico. After a few months the flow stopped abruptly when a 60-ton truck was intercepted and its contents shown mostly to comprise American guns, gathered from the battlefields of Vietnam. Mexico apparently refused to become involved in the traffic, thus forcing Cuba to discontinue shipments.

But there was something of greater importance to the guerrilla cause than second-hand military hardware: the growing presence in the parishes of central and northwestern Guatemala of Marxist-minded Catholic priests. Mainly Europeans, they worked to carry out CELAM's incitement program in the name of a new social order, more often than not ignoring the papal injunction on bearing arms. Imposed revolution spread quickly. Peasants were organized into paramilitary units in ten of the country's 21 states or departments and by the end of 1981, with five key departments completely in rebel hands, confidence ran so high that a proclamation was issued announcing a final offensive that would end in the establishment of "New Guatemala."

Such impudence must have energized the armed forces, by then boycotted for four years by Washington and down to a token 10,000 men. Doubling its manpower the army met the rebel challenge, at first with conventional search and destroy methods which only brought tougher resistance. Then in the spring of 1982 Gen. Efraín Rios Montt became head of state. A student himself of the writings of Mao Tse-tung, he transformed the campaign by issuing a three-point order: Protect and feed non-combatants, destroy the guerrilas, and bring back into civilian

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life those peasants who had gotten involved with the rebels. Before the end of the year what Chairman Mao had warned against happened: The guerrilla fish and the peasant sea had been separated. A few of the Marxist leaders, a good many of their Indian trainees, and a number of foreign priests were killed. The majority of the guerrillas fled into Mexico, some to Nicaragua or El Salvador. The EGP disappeared and along with it the parallel organizations initialed FAR and ORPA.

While an occasional terrorist ambush still occurs in the departments bordering Mexico, army men insist that subversion in Guatemala is finished. Asked what they think about it, peasants express relief that the gunfire has stopped and the burden of serving the guerrilla has been lifted. They thank the army, even walking many miles to rally spontaneously in its favor. In Chiantla, the mayor, whom I found supervising volunteer restoration work on a town hall the rebels had gutted, told me he had been astonished the day before to find several thousand farmers converging on the plaza below carrying banners proclaiming that this or that village was "with our army." Nearly a million men between 18 and 50 take turns watching village streets and mountain slopes to see that the terrorists don't come back, and they send petitions to the central government imploring that their "civilian auto-defense system" be allowed to continue.

For one with first-hand knowledge of the way things are in Guatemala, it comes as a jolt to return to Mexico City and its Foreign Press Club to find spread out on the giveaway table bulletins and even magazines published in the name of the EGP, ORPA, and FAR—as though no misfortune had struck and victory was just ahead. That this posthumous bravado fools reporters too lazy to travel to Guatemala is evident from the amount of misinformation circulating in Europe and America, and it probably gives comfort to the Guatemalan exiles who dream up the bogus contents as they await real news from their homeland.

Meanwhile, although these educated, no longer young men must reflect on the fact that their 20-year attempt to communize their country cost many thousands of lives and ended in failure, I think it safe to say that right now they are in a state of agreeable expectancy. Not for a resurgence of fighting in the mountains; they know the Indians can't be worked over a second time. But as members of the international leftist elite, they know that guerrilla warfare is not the only way to subvert a nation. Their attention is turned now to the other Guatemala, the half that is *mestizo* and white, Western and modern. National elections are scheduled for October, and in the capital the campaign is already underway.

It must be pleasing to the exiles (no doubt Mario Payeras among them) who are biding time in Mexico City, Havana, and Managua to hear from travelers and to read in the newspapers that the professional politicians vying for office, none of whom went through what the Indians went through, and all of whom identify themselves to a greater or lesser degree with democratic liberalism, never discuss Communism or anti-Communism. The exiles must read with delight each fresh indication that the military are impatient to get out of government, and they must experience positive thrills at the repeated urgings of the Catholic hierarchy that the civil defense system be abolished.

True, there is no Marxist party on the lists, but that is just as well since voters would surely reject it. Whichever of the listed parties comes out on top in October, the exiles can look forward to better days. It is probable, for instance, that they will decide to move their base of operations to Guatemala City. Would a new-born democracy dare tarnish its international media image by taking action to prevent it? □

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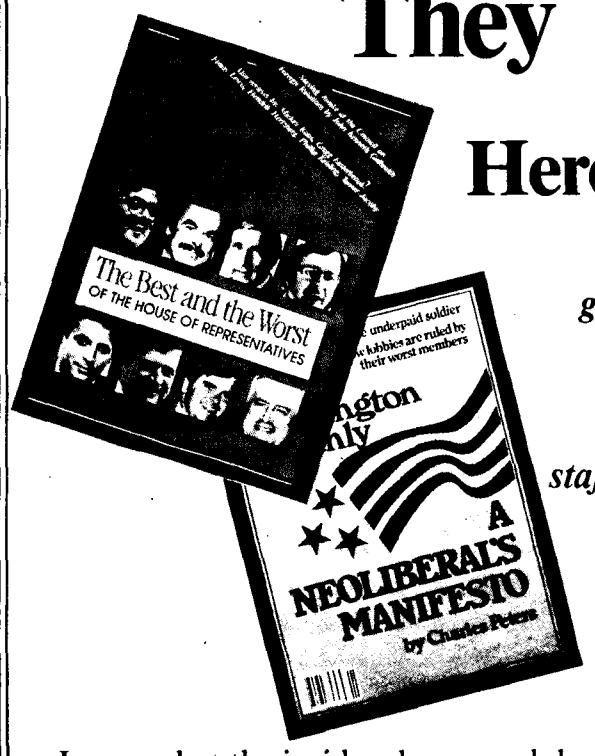

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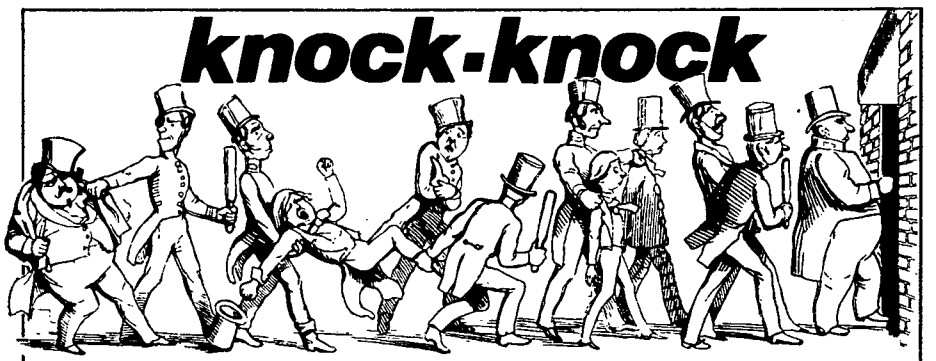

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CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT is the main stream now. The other side is bankrupt of ideas"—Reagan. Both sides are equally conservative and bankrupt of ideas. Both platforms have the same four planks—suicidal winnerless wars, inflationary fixed wages, blue collar work avoidance, and atheism (death of the herenow). To change all four in your herenow as in your herebefores and hereafters send SASE to: 4 Wrongs Righted, Box 2243, Youngstown, OH 44504.

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ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITTANICA or Collier's Encyclopedia: 1981 edition or newer. John Steichen, The American Spectator, P.O. Box 1969, Bloomington, IN 47402.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 7)

that there are others who feel that he is an egregious ass.

—Clifford Abrams
Evanston, Illinois

Even the confirmed empiricist will admit that an effort should be made to study the constituent parts of a thing and to understand them on their respective levels in their own context before commencing with the wholesale degradation of the subject in question. Anyone who does not attempt this process, or attempting it, doesn't show the attempt in his argument proves to the thinking world his unworthiness of being taken seriously, regardless of the possibility of his correctness. As a case in point, may I draw your attention to Andrew Ferguson's scathing look at the career and idiosyncrasies of Dr. Leo Buscaglia. Dr. Buscaglia's credentials and techniques aside, let us thoughtfully consider his success. He must be doing something right, even if, as Mr. Ferguson seems to believe, he has only gained mastery in telling beautiful lies. If, by whatever peaceful method, one can help others to feel more complete in themselves and less helpless in the face of the great adversity of existence in this changing society, what harm has he done that he deserves such callous treatment?

Persons of above-adequate intellect and education (whether self-acquired or obtained osmotically in the rumor mills of "higher learning") do not need pseudo-intellectual attempts at humor to tell them if Dr. Buscaglia's books are, or are not, worth the paper upon which they are printed. They can read. They can also give more than a token effort toward understanding innocuous and seemingly illogical statements. Jewels of great worth are oft found in unlikely places. Most Western minds either cannot or will not comprehend the mental gymnastics in use in the Far East for centuries. Does this mean these techniques are useless and deserving of ridicule? I think not.

Perhaps it is the practice not only of politicians, but also of modern journalists to twist the words and misinterpret the actions of their chosen enemies. If so, journalism has certainly reached a low ebb. If so, I would not mind being called a charlatan. Especially if I were included in the company of other "American charlatans," such as R.W. Emerson and H.D. Thoreau, and excluded from association with respected editorial assistants, such as Andrew Ferguson.

—W.H. McCarley III
Dike, Texas

Vox Populi

"On the Condition of American Liberalism" (*TAS*, April 1985) was indeed entertaining. But then seven editors, three professors, two authors, two columnists, and three politicians should be entertaining (well, two of three politicians isn't bad; Gary was entertaining during the campaign, and he's probably as tired as his material).

And I do sit in awe and envy of how you suckers can turn a phrase—and Buchanan and Buckley and Sobran and Will too. But, to use a phrase everyone outside of "The City" and "The Belt" will recognize (how many of the above seventeen contributors is that, anyway?), when is the last time you guys "took a walk through the plant"? When's the last time you got out among us, smelled some cutting oil or engine exhaust, kicked some dirt, skinned some shins on an open drawer where real people work, and talked face-to-face to the people who actually sent liberalism to the showers?

Most of them never heard of your conservative philosophers or philosophies. They wouldn't know a Laffer curve from a Keynesian fastball. That didn't figure in their thinking when they did what they did to "Liberalism." And they did it all by themselves. I mean, they must have; how many votes do you guys have? Regardless of how entertaining it is to those few of us who eavesdrop on you by paid subscription, aren't you really just talking to each other? How many voters, really, pulled Republican levers with your fine phrases ringing in their ears?

It seems to me that if you really want to find out the Condition of American Liberalism, you should ask those who put it into its present condition. Did they reject something, or embrace something better? If so, what, exactly? What IS "Liberalism"—by *their* definition, not yours? And what will "Liberalism" have to do to regain their approval and rise again? Give us something other than self-serving speculation based on arcane reference to ancient gurus.

To be sure, that approach would be more expensive and time-consuming than sixteen phone calls, but wouldn't you get closer to the causes and cures?

Moral: The people who know most about a job are those who do the job. It is neither managerial nor journalistic weakness to listen to those people; it is *strength*!

—Harry L. Moore, Jr.
Redlands, California

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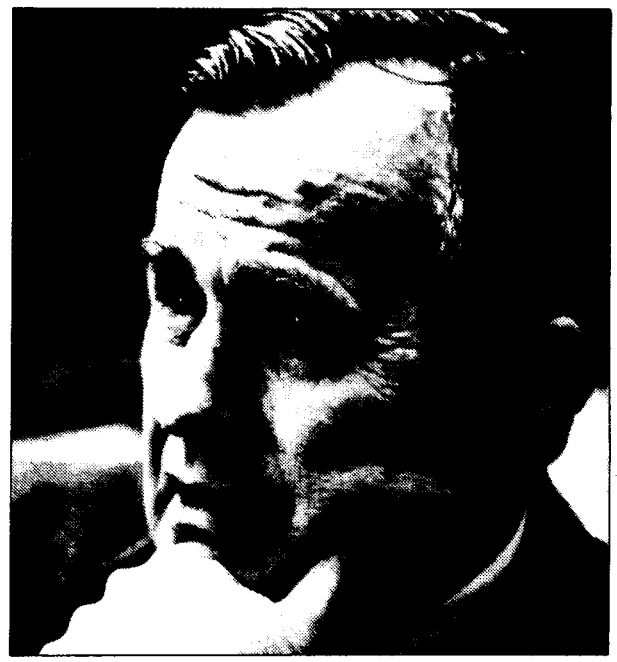
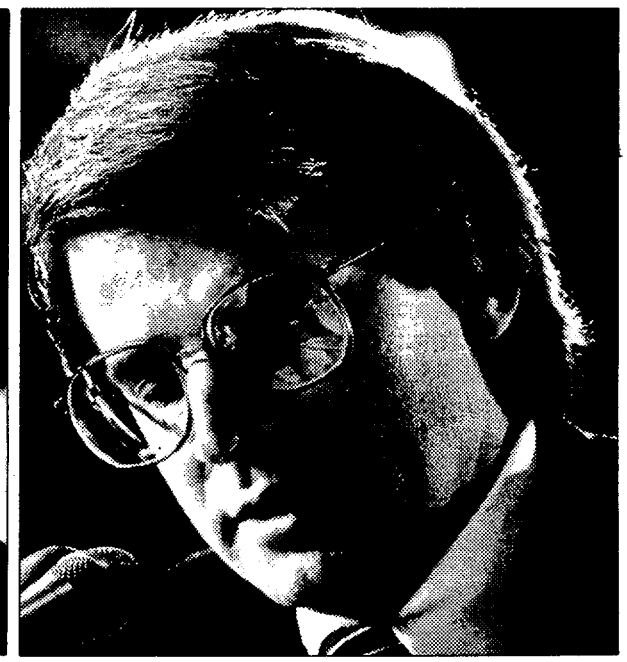

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CURRENT WISDOM

Los Angeles Times

A soap box rises on the correspondence page of the *Times* of the Golden State, and behold the beauty:

We are not numbers. We are not projections. We are not profits. We are civilization. When we suffer needlessly, cruelly, wastefully, through base ignorance, the world shudders in despair. One day, though, America will climb out of this muddy place in which we are temporarily stuck and lead the world again on a noble journey toward truth and fairness. —*Jonathan Starr*
Santa Monica
[March 18, 1985]

Toronto Sun

The American Constitution as interpreted by an eight-year-old Canadian girl and her mother, Eve McBride, guest columnist and apparent psychotic:

Her perception was that all Americans, young or old, favor war. That Canadians do not, and are therefore superior, was evident in the disdain in her voice, and it occurred to me, notwithstanding her bad manners and prejudice, that I was pleased by her outspokenness.

Another thing pleased me. In spite of all the American junk that influences her: the imbecilic "Knight Riders" and inane "Three's Company's," all the fatuous movies, somehow, a valuable insight has made it through. What she was asserting to that visiting American was: "We're different. And I don't like what you stand for."
[February 16, 1985]

Retirement Living

In a leading journal of the new radicalism, Walter Cronkite adduces still more evidence that the mind that enlightened vespertime America could with equal ease have composed ad copy for the backs of children's cereal boxes, though educators might have objected:

A great deal worries me, but that's a subject for a book. Maybe that *is* the book. I think we face four major mega-problems that are really so gross that we have trouble even conceiving of them, let alone tackling them.

I call it The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse riding down on the population: 1) pollution, 2) population, 3) depletion of natural resources—including fresh air and water—and 4) proliferation of nuclear devices. And any one of these can destroy the world.

The first one may very well. We were beginning to make some headway, but President Reagan is just turning his back on pollution and we're not doing anything. We've given up that battle. We've only got this one ship of ours floating out there in space in a closed environment and using up the fresh air and fresh water and not doing anything to return it to the environment. I don't see how in the world you can deny the situation.

And as for strength through the military, well it's not what has given America its appeal in the world; it's not in keeping with the banner and beacon of hope and the Statue of Liberty. People love the United States because of the dream of democracy and freedom. You can't teach democracy through the sights of a helicopter gun ship.
[March 1985]

St. Paul Dispatch

Mr. Otto A. Kral iterates what doubtless would have been the reaction of millions of his countrymen when this idiot Krauthammer piped up on the pages of the *St. Paul Dispatch*:

The venom spewing forth from Charles Krauthammer's March 19 column, "Soviet funeral displays belief in nothing," shows that either he is totally ignorant of both atheism and the Soviet way of life or he is deliberately hate-mongering. This smacks of irresponsible journalism.

Throughout history it has always been the non-believers who have made social and scientific progress possible in spite of setbacks such as the Inquisitions, the Dark Ages, religious wars and persecutions, and the 20th century god-fearing Nazis led by Adolf Hitler.

Or perhaps Mr. Krauthammer is jealous of the strides that have been made by the people of the Soviet Union who were at least 50 percent, and in some republics 95 percent, illiterate in 1917. After having lost 20 million people and two-thirds of its industrial, agricultural and living assets in World War II, the Soviet Union is a superpower with space explorations, military equality with the United States, no unemployment, free medical care for all, free education through college, no poverty, adequate housing for all, adequate food, no significant crime and no street people. It rivals the United States in advocating peace, coexistence and independence for all peoples of the world.

—*Otto A. Kral*
Hudson, Wis.
[March 28, 1985]

New York Times

Still more reasons why intelligent Americans have such affection for TV news—herewith we reprint one of the most popular clippings ever sent to our offices: to wit, Mr. Tom Brokaw's searching, probing thoughts on himself, as printed in a full page advertisement in the *New York Times* and paid for by NBC, or what Tom would call "big money":

"Sometimes what we report is painful and people say 'You guys only tell us the bad news.' Well, check any totalitarian country. You hear only 'good news.' Our great strength is the courage to hear all sides. Sure, we want people to be excited by achievement—space shots or triumphs of justice or medical breakthroughs. But shouldn't they also hear about malnutrition in America? Shouldn't they be outraged by what big money can get done in Washington?

"A friend of mine refers to the Brokaw Lucky Star. It's always up there, he says. He's right. I am very lucky. I was raised by hard working, honest parents who shared with me the traditional values of this society. They believed in the American dream but they believed it would be realized only if you worked hard and played fair. And, boy, nothing bothered them more than someone faking it or trying to be a big shot.

"Twenty-three years ago I found one way to guarantee that would never happen to me. I married Meredith—smart, independent, talented and she even laughs at my jokes. She keeps me focused on what's really important in this life.

"You know what I wish could happen to every man in America? An experience like mine—living with four women like Meredith and our three teenage daughters. That's the most instructive part of any man's life. Don't talk to me about what women can't do. They can do anything. Yeah, I've been lucky. And I am very grateful."
[March 24, 1985]

Ann Arbor News

A graying staff member of the *Ann Arbor News* recalls the good old days:

The noontime crowd wasn't large, but it was notably boisterous. Perhaps 100 people grouped in front of the U-M Graduate Library—most chanting slogans, some waving red flags. Not an angry gathering, but rather a gleeful, triumphant one.

"What's the occasion?" I asked a fringe member of the crowd. "Cambodia just fell to the Khmer Rouge!" she grinned back. "They just announced it!"

Yes, the event *did* seem cause for rejoicing back in April 1975.
[February 2, 1985]

Chicago Tribune

An antipodian Herodotus sends *Chicago Tribune* readers an amiable missive abounding with original observations and slogans:

Christ Church, New Zealand—Here is a rare opportunity to present to your readers the majority attitude of New Zealanders who resent being pushed around by Uncle Sam.

Unlike Grenada, we do not pose a threat on your doorstep. We simply have no wish to be "democratically forced" into your trigger-happy nuclear club.

The attitude of both your President and Pentagon is so markedly reminiscent of the fascist threat that led to World War II, it is just not funny.

Have a nice war! —*Arthur May*
[March 13, 1985]

The New Republic

A fully accredited member of the shanty intelligentsia is given a modern masterpiece to esteem, and, alas, he resorts to the drool method:

His basic ideological tool, though, is the simple credo of a candidate member of the conservative Outer Party: nukes good, antinukes bad; businessmen good, environmentalists bad; housewives good, feminists bad; "defense" good, "peace" bad.

Because he accepts the credo in its most primitive form, he commits absurdities. He insists repeatedly, for example, that appeasement "always" leads to war (on the contrary, appeasement sometimes works quite satisfactorily, as it has in America's courting of China). He also asserts that the fall of Laos and Cambodia along with Vietnam demonstrated the validity of the domino theory (it was Indochina that fell; contrary to the theory, Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, India, and California did not). Tyrrell's grasp of the creed's subtleties is not always sure. For example, having established to his satisfaction that Vietnam was "the Liberals' war," he stumbles into a serious doctrinal error: "Ultimately, the Vietnam War led to the reign of Pol Pot and the third major holocaust of this century . . ." (Theologians will recognize this as the deplorable Shawcross Heresy, a cardinal "blame America first" sin.) . . .

Sample two also offers an instance of another Tyrrellian tic, his practice of pairing words in an apparently random fashion. "Scamp" suggests an impish, lovable youngster, of the sort who might be played by Gary Coleman, while "mountebank" connotes a jovial, middle-aged medicine-show type—a W.C. Fields. Neither seems especially apt for the purpose of ridiculing Carter, though perhaps a case could be made. There is no doubt, though, that together they are perfect nonsense.
[April 8, 1985]

Washington Post

Columnist Colman McCarthy, in a scholarly review of Richard M. Nixon's latest monograph, spots RN's libertarian drift:

"No More Vietnams" is a call for no more laws, no more media, no more peace movement. The book has one asset: an alert to the nation that it needs no more Nixons.
[March 23, 1985]

New York

In reviewing *Heartbreakers*, "a sweet comedy of erotic bafflement," the venerable film critic David Denby remembers the lengths to which he had to drive his Volkswagen beetle just for one more embrace:

The picture made me recall the most pleasurable sensation of my own time in the sun (in the San Francisco Bay area)—the feeling that if you wanted to do something you could just go out and do it. Sex can be easy, soft, and dreamily irresponsible in California—surely if New York is the place where you go to get serious about your life, Los Angeles is the place, for women as well as men, where you go to get laid. This is a contribution to American civilization that should not be overlooked.
[April 1, 1985]

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"The most dangerous man, to any government, is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost inevitably he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is dishonest, insane and intolerable, and so, if he is romantic, he tries to change it. And even if he is not romantic personally he is very apt to spread discontent among those who are."

H. L. MENCKEN

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